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# **SANTAL REBELLION**

**DOCUMENTS**

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To  
IMMORTAL SIDHU KANU  
&  
all compatriots  
in the fight against  
imperialist and feudal oppression





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## INTRODUCTION

In June 1980, the Government of West Bengal organised a function, **FROM SANTAL REBELLION TO OPERATION BARGA**, to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Santal Rebellion. The objective was not to relive history. It would have been obviously sentimental. The 'Operation Barga' for recording the hereditary right of cultivation of the tribal and other share-croppers was intended in some measure to cure and remedy the painful historical experience of dispossession, deprivation and despoilation. Hence a recounting of events was felt desirable to link the agonising past with the present ameliorative efforts. A short brochure was prepared to introduce the subject of the Santal Rebellion to the current generation of administrators, social scientists and the public men. It was largely a compilation in Bengali contributed by large number of Bengalee intellectuals of the old and the new generations embodying their thoughts and reflections on that historical event. A few extracts of some relevant documents in English by some contemporary British Civilians on the subject were also published. While preparing that brochure it appeared that a large volume of historical material was available both in the archives and the printed correspondence in the District Hand books, which if presented properly, could arouse intellectual curiosity among students, teachers and research workers for delving further into the matter. An important historical incident, if not totally forgotten, has a tendency of being either romanticised or denigrated depending upon how one wants to present it before the readers. Hence the need for an objective presentation of facts.

Struggle of the tribals for retention of their land has a long history in this country. There had been insurrections and occasional uprisings followed by stunning silence and sequential sulky alienation and isolation. The attempt to bring back the tribal psyche into the main national stream through the process of land reforms had stirred their historical memory handed down by the word of mouth through the generations. The facts of the Santal Rebellion as perceived by the then colonial administrators are being presented in this compilation in the form of excerpts from a large number of contemporaneous records and writings of the British Civilians after the event. One may disagree with the interpretation or even with the presentation of certain facts, but the hard core of truth appears starkly through these documents.

A scholar might find this attempt amateurish. It is a venture of an amateur who believes that presentation of these documents and papers may, perhaps provoke competent professionals to undertake a deeper study of the different facets of the problem thrown up by the Santal Rebellion in the unknown uplands of Bribhum and Bhagalpur a century and a quarter ago, many of which have relevance even today.

**D. BANDYOPADHYAY**

**Dated, Calcutta,  
the 24th August, 1981.**

**Land Reforms Commissioner &  
Secretary, Scheduled Castes &  
Scheduled Tribes Department,  
West Bengal.**

## CHAPTER 1

### EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF R. I. RICHARDSON, COLLECTOR, BIRBHUM : SEPTEMBER 1855.

*September 13th, 1855.*

Reports from Afzulpore Thannah, mention that the inhabitants of Baboopore Deolee & Kejoree have their villages which have not as yet, however been plundered by the Sonthals.

Sonthals have again looted 'Rajor' 4 miles from Nungolea thanah suspected to be the same men. .

N. B. I have requested Col. Burney, to order Captn. Gott stationed with a detachment at Nungolea, to make a night march, and if possible surprise these Insurgents number about 600 men.

All quiet at Mohmud Bazar, spies had not returned. A detachment of Sepoy ready to march if necessary, at a moment's notice from hence.

The Daks to Rampore Haat, Nuggur Cong. Deoghur, have been put on an efficient footing by me they now arrive regularly with the exception of the last.

## II

*September 14th, 1855*

Nothing new from Afzulpore, Doobrajpore & Nuggur.

Late last evening, Col. Burney at my request sent an Express to Captn. Gott Commanding at Nungolea, ordering that Officer to make a night-march attack the Sonthals at Rajor, early this morning.

A report just in from Captn. Gott mentions that after 3 hours trial, he had been unable to get across the river More (N. B. very heavy rain fell during the night) last night. I sent a messenger off to Sergeant Gillon at Mohmud Bazar, directing

him to start immediately with his 'Irregulars' & attack the Sonthals at Deocha, where they were plundering grain. The result has not been reported yet, but the white flag is now flying at Mohmud Bazar, which means all well.

No reports have yet come in from Operbundha Sarhutt or Deoghur.

The Sonthals are in great force at & about Rajbandh Palace, Bara Battan.

### III

*September 15th, 1855*

2 p. m.

(N. B. The Dak leaves Sooree at past 2 p. m.)

Shree Mundle of Kooreemporee, and Kanto Mundle of Fazilpore have been murdered by the Sonthals in the Village of Amjurra (on the boundary N. of Soory) whither they had gone to look for their catt'e. This took place yesterday, a third man escaped and gave notice of what had occurred to the Nungolea Darogah.

Sergeant Gillon has made an attempt to reach Deocha, but could not get (owing to the flood) across the Dwarka river he will try again tonight.

The river More is much swollen consequently the Sonthals are stationary at Bora Bathen.

The Saruth Abkaree Darogah reports that all the abkars in the north of his jurisdiction have run away.

Mr. Ward has not arrived yet the expected yesterday.

(Forwarded for the information of the Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal. Sd/- R. I. Richardson)

### IV

*September 19th, 1855.*

No news of importance from Nugger Doobrajpore, Afzul-

pore. The Sonthals are in large numbers at Gae Bathan and Telobunnee 18 miles. N. of Sooree they are said to be erecting stockades, but this is doubtful. The Telobonee men are headed by a stronger, most likely, a Manjee from the Damini Koah.

Captain Gott has made an excursion as far as Buddinathpore, but previous to his arrival the Sonthals had disappeared.

The Reports from Saruth & Opurbandah are most unsatisfactory. The Sonthals are evidently steadily advancing, looting every village en route.

A detachment consisting of 100 men of the 56th N. I. marched to Mohumaad Bazar this morning to relieve Sergeant Gillon's force which, when recruited will be sent up to strengthen Gurjori a large town 6 miles west of Nugger, on the Deoghur & Sooree Road. Supplies & good Shelter will be forthcoming and the place is considered the healthiest in the neighbourhood. This force with another, about to be raised by Mr. Ward & sent to Surhut or Opurbundah will it is to be hoped prove sufficient to keep the Sonthals in check until more active separations can be undertaken.

Registrations being carried on by me several of the Manjies tendered their submission this morning.

The health of the Troops continues to be satisfactory, weather very cool.

The river More must be nearly fordable, so that the intentions of the Sontals in the North must soon become known.

(Received from Heralal Panday, Zemadar 56th Regiment N. I./21/wooden boxes said to contain small silver coins and copper Pyce to the value of Company's Rupees thirty thousand /30000/remitted to this Treasury by the Sub-Treasurer. Sd/-R. I. RICHARDS JN)

V

*September 20th, 1855*

Birchunder a village about 8 miles west of Nugger, has been looted.



The Sonthals have stopped the Dak running from Deoghur to Sooree. The Police Zemadar at Nugger, reports that the Chandra Dawh Pharee has been shut up by the Sonthals, who have ill used the runners. Two Sonthals are daily withdrawing in numbers to the N. C. about Chamoosapara Telobunee where they have built 11 large houses in the former village, where all their loot is said to be stored. It reported that they will make a stand if attacked.

A branch of a Saul Tree has just been sent in to me by the Nugger Police Zemadar who received it from Goluck Chowkeedar of Afzoolpore. This man states it was made over to him by Shiboo Gope Mundle of Champoor, with the message that the Sonthals would shortly proceed to Sooree for the purpose of having a meeting with the authorities.

Shiboo Gope states he does not know who brought the branch but the messenger expressed a hope that the ryotts would not run from their villages on the approach of the Soobah. Sergeant Gillon's force came in the morning from Mohamud Bazar, it will be recruited upto strength and armed with the Treasury Guard muskets which have been placed in the hands of the Armourer of the 56th N. I. for inspection. I hope to get this detachment of men very soon for they are much wanted in the direction Garjari.

All quiet at Rampore Haut & Doobrajpore.

(Forwarded for the information of the Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal. Sd/- R. I. RICHARDSON)

## VI

*September 21st, 1855.*

It is reported that the Opurbundah Thanah has burnt, but the report requires confirmation.

The Sonthals are looting to their hearts' content in the Saruth & Opurbandah jurisdictions, no remedy however are adopted.

The Dawk which left this for Deoghur last evening has been brought back, the runners stating that they could not get

beyond Laopie 2 miles this side of Nugger. This however, is only the Magistrate's Zemindaree Dak. My own special Dak from Nugger has arrived quite punctually and the Police Jemadar is still at Nugger.

A report has just come in that the Sonthals in very great numbers, are at Bindabone and that they have looted Bilkandu. The Gomashta who gave notice of this at the Nungolea Thanah, states that it is the intention of the Sonthals to attack Soorce immediately. I do not put much confidence in his statement as this very man has several times given the alarm without cause & apparently only desires that the troops shall be sent to protect his master's Zemindaree. Due precautions, however have been taken, the march of Sergeant Gillons's detachment for Gurjoree has been postponed & parties of his Burcondauze have been stationed to guard the Lords 3 or 4 miles down. The Officer commanding the Troops has likewise taken which measures as seemed fit to him to be required.

I hope to be able to report more fully tomorrow,

(Forwarded for the information of the Secy. to the Govt.  
Sd/- R. I. RICHARDSON)

## CHAPTER 2

### EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS RELATING TO SANTAL REBELLION, FROM GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL. JULY 30 – SEPTEMBER 28, 1855.

From : The Secretary to the Government of Bengal.

To : W. H. Elliott Esquire

Commissioner of Burdwan.

Dated, Fort William the 30th July, 1855.

Major General Lloyd has been appointed to take command of the whole of the Troops operating against the Santals.

General Lloyd has been directed by the supreme Government to proceed, in the first instance, to Rajmehal. He has been informed that the President in Council, considering it very desirable that prompt and speedy measures should be taken to put down the insurrection, has resolved upon placing the conduct of the operations entirely in his hand ; and he has been requested to take immediate steps for dispersing and capturing the insurgents and for putting down the rebellion.

In communicating these orders to this Government, the President in Council has requested that the Lieutenant-Governor would instruct the Civil officers of the several Divisions to communicate with the Major General and to afford him every information and assistance in carrying into effect the line of operations he may decide upon.

In a subsequent communication, the President in Council has explained that it was not intended by the above quoted instructions to General Lloyd that the Military should act independently of the Civil power against our own subject but simply that the nature of the Military Operations necessary for dispersing and capturing the insurgents, and for putting down the rebellion, should be entirely in the hands of the Military commanders. It is stated also that the Civil Authorities have

still power to act with the Civil means at their disposal and that the only charge intended to be made is in transferring the power each Civil officers had over the movements of the Troops to a Military Officer of experience ; operations necessary for quelling the insurrection. The President in Council considers it is added, that the Civil authorities should abstain from ordering out troops except in cases of sudden emergency, but that they should keep the Military officers, particularly the Officer in command in the district, fully informed on all points connected with the state of the country, and the movements of the rebels, and offer such suggestions as may occur to them connected with the general object in view.

Since General Lloyd's appointment it has also seemed desirable to the President in Council to appoint Colonel Bird, with the position of a Brigadier, to the special command of the Troops employed in the Beerbhoom and Bancoorah Districts. This officer is instructed to take immediate measures, in concert with the Civil officers, for dispersing and capturing the insurgents wherever they may be, and for putting down the rebellion. He is informed that Mr. Loch at Munglepore and yourself at Sooree will afford him every information and assistance ; and he is requested to act in concert with Mr. Loch and yourself in carrying out the line of operations necessary to suppress the insurrection.

The Lieutenant-Governor has only to add to the above instructions the expression of his earnest hope that you yourself and all the Civil officers subordinate to you will in every possible way, aid and promote the operations of the Troops. Your attention should more particularly be directed to procuring efficient and trustworthy guides for the troops, and to providing them with carriage and supplies. Orders have some days since, been issued to the Magistrates of all the surrounding districts, urging them to procure as many Elephants as possible, and forward them into Beerbhoom and Bhagulpore ; and some have already been sent up direct from Calcutta. Also, as soon as it shall be decided at what places detachments of troops are to be posted, you should see that every exertion is

made to afford good shelter both for officers and men ; and especial care should be taken to provide, as early as possible, charpoys or some elevated platforms for the Sepoys to lie upon.

You should likewise, if as may be possible, the medical arrangements are not yet efficiently organised take it upon yourself to see that the Officer in Command of every detached body of troops is furnished with a few simple medicine particularly Quinine, with brief instructions as to the quantities to be given.

The Lieutenant-Governor is desirous to receive reports from you of the progress of affairs as frequently as possible.

You will communicate the above orders to the several Officers subordinate to you who are employed in the disturbed districts.

W. GREY

Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.

## II

### LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVT. OF BENGAL. NO. 1808, DT. 6TH AUGUST 1855 TO A. C. BIDWELL Esqr.

The Government received from the Magistrate of Bhagulpore, a copy of document which had been forwarded to that officer by the Santha's. A translation of this document is enclosed, and the Lieutenant-Governor considers that having regard to the tenor of it, and also to the circumstance that the Santhals would appear more particularly from the accounts received from the Beerbhoom District already in a great measure to have abandoned active opposition to the Troops-sent against them, you should take every means of publishing and proclaiming among them by written notices both in the Hindee and Bengallee languages, that the Government will freely pardon all who may tender a speedy submission except those who shall be proved to have been the principal instigators and leaders of principally concerned in the perpetration of any murder. They shall be warned at the same time that against all who continue to offer resistance prompt and severe measures will be unhesitatingly adopted, while on the other hand, that as soon as complete submission is shown to the authority of Government, you will be prepared to receive and carefully enquire into all well ground complaints which they may have to prefer.

The Lieutenant-Governor has observed in several of the reports, public and private, that have come before him since the troops have been in the field, mention of Santhal-villages having been burnt in the course of active measures against the rebels.

This may sometimes have happened unavoidably and sometimes he has no doubt, as in the case of Bugnadihee, the chief position of the leading Santhals near Burhait, of the destruction of which he entirely approves, may have been done purposely

with a view to striking terror and inflicting a summary and immediate punishment on leading rebels through their property in a particular and important instance likely to make a striking impression on all the subordinate insurgents.

But it is necessary to bear in mind that the Laws have not been suspended and that a responsibility will attach to all acts of wanton and unnecessary severity and even were it otherwise, it can never, the Lieutenant-Governor believes, conduce to the early settlement of the present unhappy disturbances to make large bodies of armed men, our subjects homeless, houseless, desperate. A few severe examples must be necessary and ought assuredly to be made, but you will not, the Lieutenant-Governor feels sure overstep yourself or allow to overstep the bounds of that true moderation and humanity which should distinguish all our dealings with our subjects, even the most perverse and misguided.

(True Extract)

A. C. BIDWELL

Comr. on Spl. Deputation.

No. 2423

From : The Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.

To : R. I. Richardson Esqr.

Collector of Beerbhoom.

Dated, Fort William, 17th Septr. 1855.

With reference to your diary of the 14th instant, the Lieutenant-Governor directs me to point out to you that in making requisitions to the Military to act offensively against the Santals, you are going beyond the strict line of your duty, and as it is possible that your requisitions might at some time or other interfere, with the places of Brigadier Bird and Mr. Ward, it is better, the Lieutt. Governor thinks that you should refrain from addressing any direct requisitions to the Military Officers in the Beerbhoom District. This will not of course prevent you from assisting the Military with the advice and information which

your local position and knowledge enable you to give, in case the Officer in Chief Command in your neighbourhood has a discretionary authority from Brigadier Bird to act offensively without previous reference to him, and should himself consider it desirable to do so.

W. GREY

Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal.

From : The Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.

To : J. R. Ward Esquire

on special duty at Raneegunge.

Dated, Fort William the 21st Sept. 1855

With reference to the Extract from Mr. Richardson Diary of the 19th Instant copied on the margin. I am directed to observe that, if the Manjees referred to by him are Leaders, which the Lieutenant-Governor is inclined to believe is the case, they are not included in the proclamation and ought not therefore to be allowed to escape all punishment by submission, you are requested to point this out to Mr. Richardson.

Registratration is being carried on by me of Manjies who tendered their submission this morning.

W. GREY

Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal

(Copy forwarded to Mr. Richardson for his information and guidance. Sd/- J. R. WARD, Commr. on Special Duty)

Raneegunge, 23 Sept, /55.

No. 2635

From : The Under Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.

To : R. I. Richardson Esqr.

Collector of Beerbhoom.

Dated, Fort William the 28th Sept. 1855

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your Diary



dt. the 26th instt. and in reply to state that the Lieutt. Governor approves of your having indented for muskets but he desires me to say that all indents on the arsenal should be sent through the Government. His Honour approves also of your endeavoring to raise the Irregulars under Sergeant Gillons to 100 Strong as well as of your proposal for securing the services of three or four hundred more men by the 1st of November. you are desired to report further upon the progress which you made in doing this and to state whether more in doing this and to state whether more European Sergeants will be required to command the men ; and you will keep the Govt. punctually informed of the number of additional men that you entertain and at what cost. The number at present entertained under Sergeant Gillons is undersood to be as noted in the margin.\*

In reference to the accounts received by you of the doings at Operbundh, the Lieutt. Governor requests that your will submit a detailed and separate report regarding them.

A copy of these orders, will be furnished to Messrs. Bidwell and Ward. to the letter of whom you should report your proceedings in connection with the selection of the men you have been authorised herein to procure.

A. W. RUSSELL

Under Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal

(\* 1. Jamadar, 3 Duffadars, 66 Burkundazes)

### CHAPTER 3

#### EXCERPTS OF LETTERS WRITTEN BY R. I. RICHARDSON, COLLECTOR OF BIRBHUM TO COLONEL BURNEY, COMMANDING AT SURI. SEPTEMBER 12—OCTOBER 12, 1855.

To : Colonel Burney  
Commg. 56 N. I. Soory.

In Reply to your letter no. 155 of this day's date, I beg to state that I do not consider it absolutely necessary that at present, a force should be sent from here to reinforce the party of Irregulars under Sergeant Gillon.

I have adopted measures, by means of which, information may be very rapidly obtained from Mahmud Bazar.

I shall be very careful to give you any & every information, which I may receive, & trust you will keep two companies in readiness to make a 'dour' in case of necessity. . .

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhoom.

Soory,  
Sept. 12, 1855

To : Colonel Burney  
Commg. 56 N. I., Soory.

In today's report, received from Thannah Nungolea, it is mentioned, that the Sonthals are at the village of Rajor.

This village cannot be more than four or, at the utmost, five miles, from Nungolea and I should think Capt. Gott, with his detachment might surprise the Insurgents by making a night march, & coming upon them early in the morning.

I apprehend these Sonthals are the same men who burnt Puriharpore, immediately after the departure of Captain Fooks'

detachment & it is essentially necessary that a severe example should be made of them, if possible.

R. I. RICHARDSON

Collr. of Beerbhoom.

Soory,

September 13, 1855

To : Colonel Burney  
Commanding at Sooree.

I have the honor to report for your information that I yesterday received from the Police Zemadar at Nugger, a Saul twig, with 3 leaves upon it.

This twig had been sent to the Zemadar, from a person calling himself the Soobah Baboo with a request that he (the Jemadar) shou'd forward it to the authorities at Sooree, whom he was shortly coming to see.

I have enquired among the Sonthal prisoners in the Jail, as to the meaning of this symbol, but they are either unwilling or unable to give any information in the matter, except that the three leaves express the intention of the sender to come at the third day. Under the above circumstances, I beg you will make whatever arrangements you may consider called for, I for my part, shall send no answer to the message, it being my intention to put the Soobah in irons on his arrival.

The question as to whether he is about to come in peacefully to submit, or to try his strength with us, must remain for the present, a matter doubt.

R. I. RICHARDSON

Collector of Beerbhoom.

Sooree,

September 21st / 55.

(Received from the Sub-Treasurer at the Presidency the sum of Company's Rupees thirty three thousand/costs 33,000/ of small Silver and Copper Pyce packed in 21 Boxes as follows ;

Eight anna Pieces	15,000	0
Four anna pieccs	15,000	0
Copper Pyce	3,000	0
Total	33,000	0

The above treasure was examined before Lalla Rooplall Native Treasurer, and Gora Chand Dhur, Nittannund Sen, and Ramhary Dutt Poddar of this Colloctorate.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhoom

Beerbhoom Collrs' Office  
the 21st Sept. 1855

To : Colonel Burney  
Commanding at Soory.

In reply to your letter no. 10 of this day's date, forwarding despatch from Major Membhard (returned herewith) I beg to state that, Raneebahal is a village on the north side of the More River, distant from Mahmud Bazar 10 or 12 miles.

Major Membhard could not I think get to Raneebahal, without coming across the whole body of Santhals, collected at Bora Bothan Rangaloya.

My infomation is to the effect that a considerable number of Santhals are leaving Rangaloya for Raneebahal from whence they are going, it is surmised, to meet the Operbundah.

I have sent out 2 men to Raneebahal, who will be back tomorrow, with fresh information.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhoom

Soory,  
September 27th/55.

To : The Magistrate of Beerbhoom,  
Soory,  
Dated September 28th, 1855.

Every available man, belonging to Sergeant Gillon's force, being required to protect Nugger, I shall feel obliged by your

directing the Soory and Nungolea Darogahs to have the Ghats or fords on the More guarded by their Police.

Should you think it necessary to put on extra police, I will sanction the expenditure, the Commissioner having authorised me to do so.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhoom

To : Col. Burney,  
Commanding at Soory.

In consequence of reports received by me from various quarters, I think it very advisable that a detachment should be sent to hold Doobrajapore.

The Santhals are said to be crossing the More at Raneebehal and I think it not unlikely that their purpose is to join the Operbundah rebels at or about Gurjore and strike southward for the purpose of escaping into the Bancoorah District. Doobrajapore is outside the jungle & contains an enormous amount of property, very many of the villagers from the North-Western portion of the district having taken refuge there. Supplies & shelters for sepoys will be available on their arrival.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhoom

September 28:h/55.

To : Colonel Burney  
Commanding at Soory.

I have honor to send in original a letter received by me yesterday, from Mr. Ward.

He is anxious that Gurjore should be occupied by troops, and I consider the measure most expedient ; moreover the locality is as Mr. Ward observes, a very healthy one. Sergeant Gillon stationed at Nugger, reports that a very large body of Santhals are assembled at 'Tantiapore', a village on the Sidh

Nulah north of Indurpohare, (which latter place you will find marked in the Zillah map) and that supplies for 10,000 men are being collected there. Tantiapore is exactly north of Gurjore, distant about 7 miles so that if a strong detachment be pooled at the last mentioned place ; and the Santhals may have, of going southerly must be entirely frustrated.

With detachments at Gurjore, Nungolea Mahmud Bazar ; & Gillon's force at Nugger, I do not think the Santhals can do much, and if besides we hold Doobrajpore nothing more I am convinced can be done until the cold season commences.

The only drawback, is that Gurjore may, by this time exist only in name. I have however, sent out men to ascertain & I will, on their return afford the necessary information.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhom

Soory  
September 29th/55.

(Be so good as to return Mr. Ward's letter when done with.  
Sd/- R. I. RICHARDSON)

To : Colonel Burney  
Commanding at Soory.

In order to clear up all doubts as to the existence or non-existence of the Santhal camp at Chamoapara & adjacent villages, I yesterday proceeded with Major Numbhard & Mr. Kerr, to within 2 miles of Chamoapara.

My spies have reported quite correctly. From beside a piece of ground we discovered huts innumerable, apparently newly built, & which the villagers who accompanied us, declared to be the advanced post of the rebels, whose encampment extended at broken intervals, for 3 miles, up to Telobunnee, the residence head quarters of the Soobah.

The road as far as we went, was in very fair order & the jungle nothing at all in the vicinity of Chamoapara, there appeared to be none, & Mr. Kerr states that between that village & Telobunnee a mere brush wood jungle (intervenes).

As we proceeded we learnt but one story that the Santhals were daily packing up their loot, & retiring to the hills in anticipation of a cold weather campaign.

It occurs to me that an advantageous & decisive blow might be struck by the force now quartered at & about Soory.

To cripple the resources of the rebels is to gain a great step as regards future operations but the blow must be struck speedily & secretly.

There are no dense jungles in the vicinity of the rebels' camp. The country is high & dry & I should say the climate just as pure as that of Soory.

Mr. Kerr of Mahmud bazar volunteers to act as scout. He knows every inch of the country & his services would be invaluable.

I shall only be too happy to accompany the Troops in any capacity in which I can be of the least use.

R. I. RICHARDSON

To : Colonel Burney  
Commanding at Soory.

Having been requested by the Lieutt. Governor of Bengal, to discontinue any connection with the Santhal Insurrection, inasmuch as may appertain to the suppression thereof, I beg to request the favor of your calling in future upon the Magistrate of the District, for any information you may require, regarding the Santhals.

I have also to beg that you will direct the Quarter-master of the 36 Regt. N. I. to take charge of all elephants (the property of private individuals) now here for Government use.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhoom

Soory  
October 12th, 1855

Commanding certificate of a Guard directed to proceed on Escort duty towards Soory, in charge of Muskets and ammuni-

tion for the use of Sergt. Gillon's Irregulars.

Crops	Strength	Remarks	To what date paid.
60 Regt.	1 Habildar	To be relieved on the	To 31 Aug.,
N. I.	12 Sepoys	banks of the River Adji	1855

B. P. PAROTT, Capt.  
Major of Brigade.

Raneegunge  
12th October/55.

Received from Koomur Sing Havildar 63rd Regt. N. I. 10  
Boxes said to contain muskets & ammunition.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collector.

Soory,  
October 12th/55



## CHAPTER 4

### EXTRACTS FROM SOME IMPORTANT LETTERS ISSUED BY THE COMMISSIONER, SPECIAL COMMISSIONER AND OTHER OFFICERS DEPUTED IN CONNECTION WITH SANTAL REPELLION.

AUGUST 15—SEPTEMBER 26, 1855.

From : The Commissioner of the Nuddea Dt.  
on Special Deputation.

To : The Magistrate of Bhaugulpore  
Dated Bhagulpore, 15th August 1855.

I have the honor to annex extract paras 4 to 7 of a letter from the Secretary to the Government of Bengal to my address no. 1868, dated 6th August and to request your particular attention to the observations and instructions contained therein.

You will be good enough to promulgate amongst the Santhal population by every means in your power, copies of the enclosed proclamation and the name of every one appearing before you to make submission should be entered in a book exhibiting the following particulars.

Name/Father's Name :	Age/Place of Residence	Whether he admits having been engaged in any act of rebellion, if so the particulars.	Remark
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To all who tender their submission a certificate in the accompanying form should be given and the accompanying Mochoolka should be signed by them.

A. C. B DWELL

Comm. on Special Deputation.

### PROCLAMATION :

In as much as it appears that amongst the Santhals, who have risen in rebellion against the Government, plundering and devastating the Country and opposing the Troops, there are

many who see the folly and iniquity of their proceedings, & are desirous of being pardoned and resuming their former quiet life, notice is hereby given that the Government ever anxious for the welfare of its subjects, though led away by counsels of bad men, will freely pardon all Santhals who may within 10 days appear before any constituted authority (Hakim) and tender their submission always excepting those, who shall be proved to have been principal instigators and leaders of the insurrection and leaders of the insurrection, and those who shall be proved to have been principally concerned in the perpetration of any murder, as soon as complete submission is shewn, all well grounded complaints preferred by the Santhals will be fully enquired into. But on the other hand, all insurgents remaining in opposition to Government of the issue of this proclamation, will be visited with the promptest and severest punishment.

A. C. BIDWELL

Special Commissioner

V. GREY

Secy. to the Govt. of Bengal

No. 102

Commr.'s Office Burdwan Dn.

Burdwan The 23rd August, 1855.

To : The Offg. Collector of Beerbhoom.

I have directed the Magistrate of Burdwan and Joint Magistrate of Bankora to remit to you the salaries of the six sowars named in the margin who are stationed –

1. Chel Alee Khan	}	at Sooree ; and beg that you
2. Meer Mazfer Khan		will see to its payment to them
3. Emamjuma Khan		after deducting an advance of
4. Asuk Meer Khan		10 Rupees each made by me to
5. Meer Ahur Alee		the 4 first sowars, and credit-
6. Sheekh Tofozul Hossen		ing the same to me in part
	)	repayment of the advance of

250 Rupees I obtained from you debitable to the Santhal Insurrection.

J. M. ELLIOTT  
Offg. Commr.

No. 103

Commr. 's Office Burdwan Division  
Burdwan, The 28th August, 1855.

To : The Officiating Collector of Beerbhoom.

I have unfortunately mislaid, till today, your letter of the 14th instant no. 110, but as I have addressed you privately on its subject, the delay will not have caused any detriment to the Public service.

During my residence at Soory, all I heard from you and saw of your management of supplies for the Troops convinced me of the propriety of the course you have adopted in obtaining Provisions from Cutwa by advances from the Public Treasury, realisable on the sale of the supplies, and I can but repeat, what I told you verbally that I approved of your plan ; indeed I myself got some supplies from Jamooa Kandee through the Collector of Moorshidabad, and felt sure that His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor will relieve you of all responsibility in the matter.

As to Ata you could not have got any thing like requisite quantity in your own District. To get it elsewhere was a matter of necessity, as was the advance of Money for its purchase. Other supplies you might have obtained, though with great difficulty, by collection from various parts ; but with a kind fore-thought for the inhabitants of Soory, and for the swarms of poor who have sought refuge there, you preferred a plan which removed all pretext on which the Soory shop-keepers might have demanded famine prices. And should it be objected that the Regiment ought to be supplied by its own Moodies, I can bear you witness that its Commanding Officer admitted their utter inability to provide supplies. If I be not

mistaken, they managed to raise 90 Rupees amongst them and he offered an advance of 50/- total 140 Rupees, or about 2 days' supply of provision to be brought from a distance of 4 days' journey.

You have been purchasing largely in the Cutwa market where supplies can be had in any quantity at reasonable prices, and retailing these supplies to the Troops at the Soory rates. You will doubtless at the end of each month find that, what with cost of carriage and loss by injury from Rain &c., your receipts have fallen some what short of your Expenditure ; and I think you should as soon as possible after the close of each month, send me an exact Debit and Credit Account, the result of which I will submit to Government and I doubt that the arrangements you have made will meet the approval. I believe they deserve and that the Lieutenant-Governor will authorise you to write off the losses incurred.

A copy of your letter and of the reply will be submitted for His Honor's consideration and orders.

J. M. ELLIOTT

Offg. Commr. of Revenue & Circuit.

To : The Collector of Beerbhoom  
Raneegunge, 5th Sept. 1855.

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter no. 130 of the 3rd inst. to the address of Mr. Elliott who forwarded it to me.

If you have enough copies of the proclamation, you had better distribute them to posted in as many village as possible or otherwise made public in any manner you may think best. I have not the means of getting a sufficient nos. of copies made here, but have such translations to be lithographed as desired by Govt.

I hope they will be up in a day or two. I shall then send you a number of copies.

Should any Santhals come in to you I would solicit the favour of registering their names and acting as per instructions which

accompany. The forms of mochulkas and certificates will also be lithographed and copies supplied with the least practicable delay.

You would also oblige me by preparing the register required. I hope to relieve you of this duty as soon as I can make some satisfactory arrangement for putting the troops here and on the Grand Trunk Road, after which I shall proceed to Sooree. Should I however be delayed and detained from Govt. but for the present I hope the present arrangement may hold but you will no doubt let me know should you experience any difficulty or should your duties prevent your giving the subjects sufficient time or attention.

With regard to the Santhals you report as collected at Rajbund Pollassee you will observe that oppressive measures are not to be suspended against armed bodies and orders were yesterday issued to Major Nembhard to obtain if possible ample information and should this turn out to be an armed body to attack and disperse them. Major Nembhard has also authority to use without further orders the troops at his command agst. any armed assemblage and I hope he will not hesitate to act promptly agst. any such bodies.

J. R. WANES  
On Spl. Duty.

( Camp. Deoghur, 21st August, 1855 )

To : The Magistrate of Monghyr.

I have the honor to inform you of my arrival here this morning in command of a detachment strength as per margin.\*

I beg to annex an extract from Circular no. 299 dt. Hd. Quarters Dinapore Dn. on board the H.C.S.V. Jumna 7th August, 1855 regarding shelter being provided for the men and as the length of time the Detachment may be kept here is very uncertain, I would feel obliged by your issuing the necessary orders regarding it. There are at present six men suffering from

fever, and dysentery, and I much fear, if they are kept in Tents for any length of time the numbers will greatly increase.

The Commr. of Bhagulpore kindly lent me five Elephants to bring on my ammunition and Tents, but I am obliged to send them back to him again as he has to send them to some other quarter, in the event of my having to move from this I will find the greatest difficulty in doing so without them I would therefore, be much obliged if you could procure some 3 or 4 for me. I was directed to report my arrival here to you soon that account I ask you to assist me, if possible with Elephants.

**\*42ND. N(Lt.) INFANTRY**

1 Lieutenant, 1 Subadar, 1 Jemadar, 6 Havildars, 6 Naiks,  
2 Buglers, 94 Sepoys, 1 Lascar, 1 Bheestee ;

**HILL RANGERS**

1 Lieut., 1 Subadar, 1 Jemadar, 3 Havildars, 5 Naiks,  
2 Drummers, 97 Sepoys, 1 Lascar, 1 Bheestee, 1 Native  
Doctor.

H. W. B. GORDON, LTT.  
Comdg. Detachment.

To : The Collector of Soory  
Raneegunge, the 9th Sept. 1855

I have to thank you for your demi official reports of 6th and 7th instants which reached me this morning.

There can be no doubt, that the Doomkah Santhals are determined to hold out, and all we can do is to prevent their escaping, for I hope that unless the proclamation has a very different effect to what I anticipate. Govt. will direct a sweep through the jungles in the cold weather.

As regards the assemblage at Rajbond Polassee, I am inclined to think the Santhals there are not now, whatever, they may have been before, peaceably disposed. I would therefore ask you to communicate with Major Nembhard who has the Brigadier's authority to march against any armed body of

Santhals, and if these Santhals are still at Rajbond Polassee and it be not very clearly established either by a demonstration from themselves, or on other good information that their object is submission, a Detachment should in my opinion be marched against them. There may be good reason for not risking the health of the troops such as the nature of the country ; the shelter to be found, supplies to be procured, distance to be traversed and the like of which the military officer is to be judged but this is the theory which I would, if possible put into practice. It is however, difficult from here to say how it should be acted on, and you will no doubt be guided by the information you receive for you can judge of the reliance to be placed thereon better than I can, but I would on no account harrass the troops unless satisfied of the emergency of the case.

The Burkundages may be sufficient at Mohamed Bazar, but if the place is not unhealthly, Brigadier Bird agrees with me in thinking a Company of sepoys should hold the village, if an attack is intended. The Brigadier intends I believe, to write to Major Nembhard on this subject.

Would you oblige me by letting me know whether Harmah Majhee of Seetasal who I believe surrendered to Mr. Loch or to you has returned to Sooree. I hear he was sent out to bring in other head men but was attacked by the rebels, his village destroyed, and property plundered, he himself narrowly escaping because he had set such a bad example.

The lithographed translations of the proclamation have not yet been received.

I. R. WARD

Commissioner on Special Duty.

No. 80

(Camp : Raneegunge, 10th Sept., 1855)

In consequence of a Communication received yesterday from R. Richardson Esqr., at Sooree reporting the assemblage of Sonthals in the neighbourhood of Mohamed Bazar and appre-

hending an attack in that quarter, I am direct desired by the Brigadier Commanding to call your particular attention to the circumstance and to request, you will not fail to employ the Troops and at your disposal should you consider the men under Sergeant Gillon insufficient for the protection of the above named Bazar.

I am further directed to add, that in the event of your obtaining reliable informations of the assemblage of armed Sonthals, alarming the inhabitants, and plundering villages in the neighbourhood of Sooree, you will attack and disperse any such bands within reach, instructions the officer in Command to lose no time in returning to Cantonments when the necessity which caused the movement, ceases to exist.

B. PARROTT CAPTAIN  
Major of Brigade

No. 134

Commer's Office, Burdwan Dn.  
Burdwan, the 27th September 1855

To : The Offg. Collector of Beerbhoom.

During my recent deputation to Beerbhoom, I drew upon your Treasury for 3 sums of 1,000, 500 and 250 Rs., total seventeen hundred and fifty.

The first of those sums was for Major Nembhard, commanding the 56 N. I. an advance required by him for the current expenses of his Regiment, for which he is accountable to the Military Department. I obtained the case from John Erskine Esqr. at Ilambazar and gave him an order upon you for the amount. Colonel Burney informs me he has paid that sum into your hands to my credit of which I beg you to certify me.

The second was for the Magistrate and will be accounted for by him.

The third was for myself, of that sum 68 Rupees only were expended – and I beg you now to credit it to me as per



accompanying Bill duly audited, and chargeable to the Santal insurrection. The rest was advanced, and you will recover 40 Rupees thereof by a deduction from the salaries of 4 Road Police sowars which I have requested the Magistrate of Burdwan had the Joint Magistrate of Bankoorah to remit to you the Balance Rupees 142. I have recovered and beg to enclose a draft on your Treasury for the amount, requesting you to favor me at your convenience, with a receipt for Cos. Rupees 250/- in realization of the advance made by you.

I beg also to be favoured with a receipt for 500/- when you shall have received that money from the Magistrate or with a certificate of its repayment by him.

W. W. SCOTT

Offg. Commissioner

No. 44

From : The Special Commissioner for the  
Suppression of the Santal Insurrection.

To : The Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal,  
Fort William, Dated, Bhagulpore, 26 Sept. 1855

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter no. 2509, dt. 21st instant forwarding copy of a letter addressed to Mr. Ward on the subject of submission made by certain Manjees of Sonthals.

His Honor remarks that if the Manjees referred to are leaders, which the Leutt. Governor is inclined to believe is the case, they are not included in the proclamation, and ought therefore not be allowed to escape all punishment by submission. This remark being forwarded for my information, I am induced to address you in order to explain, that the mere fact that the Sonthal having the affix Manjee to his name must not be taken in all cases denoting him to be the Manjee or head man of a village much less as constituting him a leader in the insurrection.

Properly speaking the Manjee is the headman of the Sonthal

village and is certainly a leader of the people, but there are many besides who bears the name of Manjee, without any office just as the affix Mundul is common in parts of Bengal, and by no means designates the bearer thereof to be the Mundul of a village.

And even if the Sonthal be the Manjee of a village, though he is certainly as a man of influence more to blame if he joined the insurrection, than the common herd of Sonthals, yet when such a man comes to make submission, if there is nothing forthcoming to prove either active participation in the insurrection, or concern in a case of murder, against him, it would be difficult to refuse to him, conditionally at least, the protection of the proclamation. Moreover the village Manjees holding back, which they would do if they found any of their number seized and punished without specific grounds, on coming in to make submission would have the effect of deterring any of the common herd of Sonthals from giving themselves up and making submission.

I should therefore, unless otherwise instructed, be disposed to receive the submission of Manjees (even actual and not nominal Manjees) who come in to make submission, instructing them that their protection is conditional upon no proof of active participation in the rebellion being adduced against them. Such participation might from their position be held to constitute leadership. The higher class or Pergunnait who are placed above 30 or 40 Manjees stand alone. There are no Pergunnait by name only. But the submission of even a Pergunnait should I think be received, and protection conditionally granted for there are many Pergunnait who have never joined in the insurrection and there is nothing to prevent subsequent charges being preferred against such as may be formed to be implicated either as leaders or murderers.

A. C. BIDWELL

Spl. Commissioner

Fort William  
the 3rd Octr., 1855

## CHAPTER 5

### SOME IMPORTANT LETTERS AND REPORTS SENT BY THE DISTRICT AUTHORITIES OF BIRBHUM. SEPTEMBER 13 – DECEMBER 31, 1855.

To : Brigadier Bird,  
Commg. in the Beerbhoom & Bancoorah  
Soory, September 13th, 1855.

I beg to report for your information, that for the last few days, reports of a very unfavourable nature have been received by me from the Darogah of Sarhut and Opurbundah as also from members of the inhabitants residing in that part of the district.

The Sodthals are without doubt looting, burning & Murdering in all the villages, in the vicinity of Rukoha on the Boundary.

They have committed four murders in the village of Kotahur. Sgt. Gordon with 200 men is at Deoghur. Could not half this number be sent to Sarhut? The measure would be productive of much good & Suruth is a much healthier place than Deoghur.

I trust you will give the subject your best attention.

Sgt. Gordon being stationed within the Beerbhoom district. I conclude he is under your orders.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhoom.

(P.S. There is good accommodation to be had at Saruth & plenty of Supplies. The Officer on Duty might live in the Moonsiffs Cutchery. Sd/- R. I. RICHARDSON, Collr.)

II  
REPORT FROM THE MAGISTRATE OF BEERBHOOM  
TO THE COMMISSIONER OF BURDWAN DIVISION.  
DATED 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1855.

During the past fortnight, upwards of thirty villages have been plundered and burned by the insurgents in Thannah Operbandah and Nangoola. The whole of the country, from Lorojore, four miles west of Nuggur, to within a short distance of Deoghur, is in their hands. The Dawks (mails) are stopped, and the inhabitants have deserted their villages, and fled. They are divided into two large bodies : one encamped at Raksadangal, ten miles north of the Operbandah Thannah in Zillah Bhagulpore ; and the other at Teelaboonie, six miles west of Soory, and also in Bhagulpore, but on the confines of Thannah Nangoolea, and their numbers average, as nearly as we can ascertain, from 12,000 to 14,000 and are receiving augmentations from all quarters.

A party of about 3000 of the Raksadangal Santals, led by Mooheea Kosnjola, Rama and Soondra Manjhees, encamped near Operbandah on the afternoon of the 16th inst, and on the following day plundered and burnt the Thannah and village. The Darogah and Burkundazes remained at their post till the last moment ; but seeing the overwhelming numbers of their assailants, and that resistance on their part must be useless, they retreated, and the Darogah contrived to escape with great difficulty via Shanna and Afzulpore, and arrived here on the 22nd with only the clothes on his back. He had heard some days before that the Santals intended attacking the Thannah, and had sent all the records, etc. to Deoghur for security, and also applied to the Officer commanding the detachment there for assistance ; but the latter, owing to the distance and dense jungle en route, declined to send troops to his aid. On informing Mr. Ward of the circumstances, he told me that detachments of troops were to be sent forthwith from Ranee-

gunge to Jumterra in Thannah Shanna, to Operbandah, and to Afzulpore, to be stationed there until the military force can take the field against the Santals after the rains are over ; and I have just heard that the detachment has arrived at the former place, which will suffice for the protection of Thannah Shanna, in the jurisdiction of which no plunder has yet been committed; but the Santals are now assembling with the intention of joining the rebels. Until troops are stationed at Operbandah, everything must remain in the present state of anarchy and confusion ; but directly they arrive. I shall send the Police back to the Thannah, and set the Dawk ( mail ) going again. At present it is impossible, as Rama Manjhee, with 200 men, has taken up his position in the jungle near Haldigurh Hill, and waylays and plunders everything that attempts to pass that way. The absence of a civil officer at Decghur is greatly to be regretted at the present juncture, when his services would be of so much value ; but I have already brought this to your notice in a former letter.

The gang of from 5000 to 7000 Santals, under Seeroo Manjhee, who had taken Sooleah Takoor at Teelabooney, have strengthened their position by earthworks, and dug tanks there. They have also made preparations for celebrating the Doorgah Pooja, for which purpose they have carried off and detained two Brahmins from one of the villages plundered by them in Thanna Nangoolea ; and spies who came in yesterday say that they are only waiting for the Raksadangal gang to join them, before advancing to attack Soory ; but I think it improbable that they will venture to attack the station under present circumstances. They sent us in what is called in their language a 'dahra' or 'Missive' viz. a twig of the Sal tree leaves on it, each leaf signifying a day that is to elapse before their arrival a few days ago, which was brought by one of the Deoghur Dak runners, whom they seized and sent back for the purpose. The Colonel commanding has taken the precaution of stationing piquets at different points on the north and west side of the station, which would be most exposed in the event of an attack and I understand that Sgt. Gillon and his Burkundazes, whom

I placed at the disposal of the Special Commissioner when here, at the latter's request, is to be sent to Nuggur, where the residents are in a state of great alarm, and many have deserted their houses.

To : J. R. WARD Esqr.  
Commissioner. Raneegunge.

It is not my wish to pry into the kind of operation about to be undertaken by the Govt. with regard to the suppression of the Sonthal Insurrection, but I must request the favor of information upon one point, viz, who is to be Commissariat Officer to the troops now here, & those perhaps about to come when an advance shall be made into the Jungles.

You are aware that for the last 3 months I have furnished supplies, but I am now winding up my accounts, owing to the Bunneahs in the town, being able to meet the present demand.

This last arrangement will do very well as long the troops remain the station, but not so, when detachments go out into the Jungles.

I wish to know therefore, what arrangement shall be made ; if the Govt. intend that I shall continue the duty, some intimation ought to be conveyed to me of the probable number of men likely to be assembled at Soory for field service.

I submit that the means adopted by me of drawing supplies from a rather distant market Cutwais the best under existing circumstances ; it may cost the Govt. somewhat more, but by so doing, the distant markets are not impoverished and prices not raised to famine rates. There is little enough grain in the district owing to the rascally Sonthals, without causing a further drain.

In soliciting instructions, I beg most strongly to represent that I do not do so with the hope of becoming Commissariat Officer. The work is laborious in the extreme, but I wish that something may be done, in time too, to supersede the custom of making the local Zemindars provide for all wants, when by

so doing they oppress their ryots and raise the price of food into the bargain.

The probable number of men to be fed from Soory should be secretly furnished and I would send funds quickly to Cutwa & buy up before the Bunneah, received information and raised their prices all round.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collector.

To : J. R. Ward Esqr.  
Special Commissioner.

I beg to forward for perusal a letter just received by me, from Captain Ford, commanding at Deoghur, requesting me to send supplies for the use of his detachments, consisting of five companies.

It is not possible, for me, to comply with Captain Ford's request. Deoghur is distant 85 miles from Soory, and the communication has been intercepted by the Sonthals for more than a month past.

I cannot positively speak as to the remissness of the Ghatwals of the Police at Deoghur, is not procuring provisions and I am much inclined to believe that the fault does not rest with them, for the last six weeks the country around Deoghur has been altogether in the hands of the Sonthals and the collecting of supplies most difficult.

It must be borne in mind moreover that wheat and Dhal are not cereals indigenous to this district, and consequently supplies of the kind/essentially requisite for up country men/ have to be procured from a distance.

On the whole, though many other officers besides Captain Ford, have complained in some instances, very strongly against the Ghatwals and Police, I must say, that throughout the district, the Zemindars, Ghatwals and Police, with few exceptions have done their best to meet the calls made upon them by me. They have had innumerable obstacles to contend against, many of

them have lost their all, many have procured supplies but not received payment for the same, for weeks, some have run away altogether despatching of...and some have met their fate at the hands of the Sonthals. It is not for me to suggest what ought to have been done...time to secure supplies for the troops at Deoghur and its vicinity, the mischief is now done, and I can afford no assistance whatever to Captain Ford ; Nearly all the detachments in the Beerbhoom District are furnished with supplies by me, either through the Zemindars & ca., or directly from my stores, the only exception being Deoghur, to which place as the Ghatwals have hitherto provided pass and the road is now closed. I am unable to send what is so much needed.

If the Government do not speedily make known their intentions as to how the Beerbhoom Field Force is to be supplied with provisions in the operations about to be taken against the Sonthals, there will be terrible oppression exercised upon the inhabitants of these districts, oppression which will be doubly felt, coming of a crisis like the present.

R. I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhoom

Soory,  
October 27th, 1855

To : Major General Lloyd.

I reply to your letter no. 310, dt. 4th Decr. I have the honor to forward to you the Sonthal prisoners noted below :

1. Kamoo Soobha, 2. Chand Ray Manjhee, 3. Bhuro Manjhee, 4. Kamoo Manjhee, 5. Durga Manjhee, 6. Mota Manjhee, 8. Nemay Manjhee, 9. Rumabsa Manjhee, 10. Alhar Manjhee, 11. Hareedass Manjhee, 12. Morarea Manjhee, 13. Muttah Manjhee.

The four men, who apprehended the Santhals when they were attempting to effect their escape towards the Damooda also accompany the prisoners.

I beg to transmit at the same time the papers of the Mofussil



investigation made by the Operbandha Darogha and different articles of property which were found in the possession of the prisoners.

Among these will be seen the clasp belonging to the late lieutt. Toulmen which the prisoner Kanoo was wearing on his arm at the time of his capture, also some books & papers belonging to other gentlemen I should wish that latter might be returned to this Court at the conclusion of the trial, so that I may be enabled if possible to find out the owners & restore the property. There are some other things left here such as clothes & a few rupees & pice but as they would form no evidence against the prisoners, I have detained them here pending the result of the Court martial.

R. THOMPSON

Zillah Beerbhoom

The 6th Decr /1855.

(P. S. I would further add that there will be found in the box herewith sent some letters which were in the possession of Kanoo & are convincing proof against him.)

To : The Hon'ble A. Eden.

Asstt. Spl. Commissioner

Koomerabad.

With reference to an application made by Major General Lloyd to Govt. for the appointment of a special Judge to trial some Santal prisoners who have been committed by the Civil authorities in the camp for charges not cognizable by Court martial I have the honor to request you would supply me with information as how many of these cases are ready for disposal. I should be obliged at the same time if you would kindly give me the particulars as to the number of men in each case, on what charges they are committed & how many belong respectively to this district – that of Bhagulpore.

R. THOMPSON

Offgr.

The 8th Decr./1855.

To : Brigadier Bird  
Commanding in the Beerbhoom and  
Bancoorah District  
Sooree, December 9th 1855.

Scarcely a day now passes, but either Magistrate, or myself, receive petitions from the Zemindars and Ghatwalls, in the North-western portion of the district, praying that some assistance may be given them, in furnishing supplies for the troops

Petitions lately presented, state that the number of troops, is very considerable. You are aware that I have a large quantity of supplies in store, and that I am most anxious to relieve the Landholders from duties which they cannot efficiently perform ; this however I am unable to do, owing to the road beyond Gurjori being stopped.

I can bush up any quantity of supplies, as far as that place. if you will instruct officers commanding Regiments, or Companys to have their elephants, at a certain place, on any fixed day. My principal odject in undertaking Commissariate duties, was to prevent the necessity of the local Zemindars & Ghatwals being called upon for supplies, it is in reality the poorer classes who suffer & from whom the grain is procured, invariably without payment or any return being made by the Zemindars' subordinates.

Under these circumstances, I trust you will see the necessity (if in your power). of indents being made upon me for what may be required.

ROBERT I. RICHARDSON  
Collr. of Beerbhoom.

To : W. Grey Esqr.  
Secy. to the Government of Bengal,  
Fort William.

In continuation of my letter no. 542, dated 8th instant and in

reply to your communication requesting me to state my opinion as to the necessity of deputing a special Judge to try these cases in Major General Lloyd's Camp, which were not cognizable by a Court martial, I have the honour to state that from a letter I have received from Mr. Eden the Asstt. Special Commissioner I ascertain that there are 33 prisoners camps awaiting trial on different charges of murder and other heinous crimes of these or prisoners in one case belong to the Beerbhoom District, the remainder to Bhagulpore — Mr. Eden further adds 10 or 12 prisoners captured by Mr. Poulet are daily expected and that their cases would only be disposed of by the Civil authorities. Even with this expect increase however, I cannot consider the deputation of a special officer in any way necessary. I believe the whole of the prisoners are comprised in about 4 to 5 cases and the trial of these would occupy a Judge with ordinary labour but while the expense and inconvenience which the measure would render necessary would hardly be justified by the immediate disposal of the cases.

I mentioned in my former letters that the Burkundages under Sergt. Jackson now stationed at Nugore about 14 miles from this, were especially retained by Krig (see letter dated 17th Nov.) for the escort of prisoners or any other such duties as would save the troops this extra work. There are in this force besides Jemadar and Duffadars 66 men who for a long time have been comparatively idle. Their only duty has been to guard the village of Nugore but as the troops are now stationed on all sides for an advance of this position, there seems little use in keeping them at that post. I would beg to recommend that 30 of these men with 2 (Duffadars should be deputed to convey the Beerbhoom prisoners to this station where their trial would proceed in usual form as to the rest of His Honor the Secutt Goor should think fit to confer upon me the authority to try these cases, under the prisoners of Regul. VII of 1822, it would in my opinion be a more expedient course than either sending the prisoners to such a distance as Bhagulpore or deputing a special Judge to conduct their trial in the Major Generals' Camp.

By two divisions of the prisoners the whole of these might be safely conveyed to Soory on one week, and though the Calender of the commitment for this district in the present month is very heavy I have little doubt that by the end of Jany. all these extra trials might be brought to a conclusion. At least in the choice of difficulties this course seems to me the most feasible.

RIVERS THOMPSON

Offg. Magistrate.

The 1th Decr , 1855.

To : Frances Lowth, Esqr.  
Session Judge of Beerbhoom.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter no. 185, dt. 17th Decr. & beg in reply to submit the report called for therein.

The prisoner Juttoo Rae had been placed on the 29th Novr. last under the charge of Gujoo Singh Burkundaze I had given strict orders to the Darogah not to send him to labor away from the jail & accordingly on the day in question the prisoner had been employed in carrying the bags of rusuds which were being loaded on some Elephants to be forwarded to Major General Lloyds' Camp. This work necessarily kept the prisoners with the precincts of the prison. It appears however that in the evening the Burkundaze Gujoo Sing contray to all orders took the prisoner Ghuttoo Sing & four others to a neighbouring field for the purpose of allowing them to ease themselves. While there the prisoner absconded and effected his escape. The Burkundaze must have been aware of the circumstances within a few minutes of its occurence and had he given notice at once, escape would have been impossible as there was sufficient day light remaining to ensure the recapture of the prisoner before he could have gone beyond the limits of the station. Instead however of acting upto his duty, the Burkandazes resorted to the expedient of making over his four prisoners to 3 Burkandazes who were returning to the Jail with some other convicts. Gujoo Sing himself, making a pretence of

being unwell, went off his home.

The Burkundazes arrived at the Jail and made over their own prisoners and the four they had received from Gujoo Sing, to the guards who were on duty at the front gate. From the evidence of these Burkundazes it does not appear that the absence of one prisoner was detected by these guards—and in this lies their neglect or if as they assert they did discover the circumstances, their misconduct appears in a worse light from their not reporting the matter at once either to the Jail Darogah or to myself, as I was standing at the time within a few wards of the Prison Walls.

Nothing appear to have been said about the matter till between 7 & 8 O'Clock in the evening. There has been lately a strong ill feeling between the Darogah & his subordinates in the Jail, arising from the fact of the Darogah having reported since my arrival here, many delinquencies in the conduct of the officials who are under him & I have little doubt in concluding that it was in the hope of bringing their suspicion into some kind of disgrace that they withheld from him the information of the escape of the prisoner till all hopes of his immediate recapture had passed.

Notice of these events was given to me about 12 O'Clock neighbourhood in the chance of securing the prisoner before he has got off his fetters. The next morning, notices were sent throughout the District and to the Magistrates of the adjoining Zillahs. I further offered a reward of Rs. 50 for his apprehension and have sent an active and intelligent Burkundaze to the village where the prisoner resided (situated in the Bhagulpore District) & hope that before long his recapture will be effected.

As regards the man through those gross neglect, amounting almost to connivance the prisoner succeeded in absconding, I have after a full enquiry into the matter, sentenced the Burkundaze Gujoo Sing to be imprisoned for 3 months and pay a fine of Rs. 5 in lieu of labor.

The other guards named in the margin\* who were on duty

\* 1. Gopal Sing...Jemadar

3. Mohadeblal...Burkundaze

2. Soodan Patak...Gate Duffadar.

4. Mubammudally...Burkundaze.

at the gate I have dismissed from Employ. I hope the punishment will be efficacious in suppressing such gross carelessness for the future though I cannot conceal the fact that there is not only a great want of discipline throughout the Jail management, but also that there exists a strong sympathy between the Jail officials and the prisoners which is altogether to a strict control & restraint there under confinement.

Zillah Beerbhoom,  
the 19th Decr. 1855

RIVERS THOMPSON  
Offgg. Magistrate.

To : W. Grey, Esqr.  
Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal.

I have the honor to bring the following circumstances to your notice.

Having been ordered by the Govt. to furnish supplies to the Forces employed against the Sonthals, I entered into arrangements/as nothing was to be obtained in this district/to get what I considered the necessary quantities from Cutwa a large market 44 miles from this.

I am guided in making my purchases, by a letter received by me from Capt. Macpherson, Asstt. Commissary, who at the request of General Lloyd acquainted me that among other supplies 2100 maunds of Atta would be required from the 24th of November to the 24th Decr. for the Bhagulpur Force alone.

This calculation was made at the rate of 1 seer per day per fighting man & in this I made my calculation for the Beerbhoom Force, which was fully equal in number to that of the Bhagulpore and for whose want I was certain to have to provide as the Ghatwals and Zemindars had previously by petitions incessantly pouring in, advised me that they had nothing to do to feed troops. nor could they under existing circumstances procure any.

I therefore, commissioned Mr. Hewett the Deputy Magistrate of Catwa to buy me immediately, as the Bhagherutty was shut,

and grain daily rising in price, 5, 000 maunds of wheat.

To grind this quantity, I procured from Moorshedabad 100 Chukkee which according to the best information, would turn out fully 100 maunds of Atta per diem or something under the demand to be made upon me.

This calculation however was set at nought by the fact after trial that 20 seers was the utmost that could daily be turned out from each chukkee per diem.

In this emergency, I was obliged to indent upon the Dy. Magts. of Cutwa for 'Atta' and he sent me daily as much as he could get prepared.

On or about the 25th Novr. Captn. Macpherson indented upon me for 700 mds. of atta or one third of the whole quantity required. I could not comply with his demand but sent him 625 maunds. On or about the 1st Dec. he indented for 385 mannds more, I was only able to supply 100.

After the date last mentioned Captn. Macpherson desisted from taking further supplies, and indeed on passing through Sooree, with General Lloyd, returned a considerable quantity into my Godown. He also informed me that some of the Regiments in the Jungles were well supplied.

I have ground down about 1000 mds. of my wheat but 4000 mds. remain.

In times like the present, when the Military occupy every nook and corner in this small place, room for storage was most difficult to obtain. The Magistrate however kindly gave me up a pucca word in his Jail. In this I placed the wheat.

Lately having occasion for the Ward the Magistrate requested me to vacate it. On removing the bags of wheat, it was discovered that Weevil had attacked the grain to a considerable extent, measures were immediately taken up by me to try and remedy the evil & about 1500 mds. will I hope be reserved tolerably intact. The remaining 2000 maunds have been thrown down loose on straw & mixed with husks, which I believe is the only remedy capable of being adopted.

The business is a most unfortunate one, but quite unavoidable. Wheat I believe is now at famine prices at Cutwa there

is none at Burdwan common country is selling at 3 per maund, & at Moorshidabad, Atta is only 15 seers per Rupee, and much adulterated. I do not in this extremity know what to do the markets are empty, the shut & until next harvest, wheat will not be procurable. I doubt the likelihood of the Dy. Commissary General allowing Lt. Agilvie to receive wheat in the state about 2000 maunds are in & I therefore request the permission of His Honor the Lt. Governor of Bengal to be allowed to interfere the sale of the above quantity and then dispose of the same to the highest bidder are more damage ensues.

Sooree,  
the 31st Decr. 1855.

R. I. RICHARDSON,  
Collector.



**CHAPTER 6**  
**SOME COURT RECORDS RELATING TO SANTAL**  
**REBELLION, DECEMBER 1855.**

Statement of 22 convicts sentenced by the S. Judge of Zillah Beerbhoom for different period forwarded from Beerbhoom to Hazareebagh under the orders of Government dated 3rd Decr. 1855, no. 3400.

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date	Description of their persons & place of residence.
1. Singray Manjhee son of Meghor	Illegally & riotously assembling with weapons for the purpose of plunder to commit a breach of the peace	To be imprisoned with labor & irons for five (5) Yrs. 12th Novr., 1855.	aged about 29 yrs. dark complexion, flat nose, burning marks 4 in number in the left hand, inoculation mark on right hand, mark of an ulcer on the right of the back, size 5 ft. 7 in Caste Sontal, Resident of Ashna Thannah Nangolia Zillah Beerbhoom
2. Nuffer Koomar son of Moochee- ram	Pal -do-	-do-	aged about 49 yrs. dark complexion, inoculation marks on both hands has a pustule on the belly, mark of a sore on the left leg, size 5 ft. 2 in. Caste

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
			Koomar resident of -do-
3. Sham + Mal Paharia son of Roopne-rain	Riot with plunder	-do- 5 -do- 13th Novr., 1855.	aged about 37 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, has several moleson body marks of sewing hooks on the back mark of a wound in a toe of right leg, size 5 ft. 2 in. Caste Paharia Mal Rest. of Sandah Thannah Noolae Zillah Bhagulpore.
4. Parash Manjhee son of Khettoo.	Illegally & riotously assembling with weapons for plunder property of parties unknown.	Do one year with irons & to pay a fine of Rs. 25 in lieu of labor. 14th Novr., 1855.	aged about 16 yrs. Dark complexion, flat nose, mark of burning 2 in number on left hand, bored ears, size 5 ft. Caste Sontal, Resident of Masangore, Thannah Nangolia Zillah Beerbhoom.
5. Chandra Manjhee son of Mungola.	-do-	-do-	aged about 18 yrs. Dark complexion, flat nose, marks of burning 3 in number on left hand, blackish mark on the back

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
			size 5 ft. Caste Sontal Rest. -do-
6. Salkho Manjhee son of Gora	-do-	-do- 3 y r s. with irons & to pay a fine of Rs. 100 in lieu of labor. 14th Novr, 1855.	aged 31 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, flat nose, burning marks 4 in number on left hand, inoculation mark on right hand, size 5 ft. 3 in. Caste -do- Resident of -do-
7. Singroy Manjhee son of Koomar	Illegally & riotously assembling with wea- pons and plundering the village of Katna in Z1. Beerb- hoom	To be impr- isoned for 5 yrs. with labor & irons. 17th Novr. 1855.	aged about 40 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, mark of an ulcer under breast, marks of burning 3 in num- ber in the left hand, size 5 ft. 4 in. Caste Sontal Rest. of Katna Zillah Beerbhoom.
8. Kanchan Manjhee son of Cumbheer.	-do-	-do-	aged about 35 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, marks of burning 7 in num- ber in left hand, inoculation mark on right hand, size 5 ft. 5 in. Rest. of Teelaboonee Thana Afzulpore Zillah -do-

no.	Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
9.	Luckun Manjhee son of Gobind	-do-	-do-	aged about 38 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, broad forehead, flat nose, marks of burning 4 in number in left hand, inocula- tion marks on right hand. 2 of the toes of right leg crooked. size 5 ft. 6 in. Caste Sontal. Rest. of -do-
10.	Kaloo Manjhee son of Ram Rov.	-do-	-do-	aged about 45 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, broad forehead, flat nose, 3 inoculation marks on left hand, on in right hand, mark of a sore on the right side of the back, size 4 ft. 11 in. Caste Sontal Rest. of -do-
11.	Dhunac Manjhee son of Koddye	-do-	-do-	aged about 37 yrs. dark complexion. marks of burning 3 in number in the left hand inocula- tion mark on right hand, several marks of sore on the back, size 5 ft.

No. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
			6 in. Caste Sontal, Rest. of Leolebona Thana Afzalpore, Zl. Beerbhoom.
12. Ruroo Manjhee son of Ram Roy.	-do-	-do-	aged about 29 yrs. dark complexion, inoculation marks & burning marks 3 in number on left hand & one in the back, size 5 ft. 2 in. Caste Sontal Rest. of Zeelabad.
13. Motha Manjhee son of Kade.	-do-	-do-	aged about 41 yrs. dark complexion marks of burning 4 in number on left hand, inocula- tion marks on right hand, has a postub under right eye, size 5 ft. Caste Sontal. Rest. of Se o u b e b o n a Thana Afzalpore, Zillah Beerbhoom,
14. Bagud Manjhee son of Bunar	Illegally & riotously assembling with wea- pons & plundering the village of Katna in	To be imprisoned for 5 yrs. with labor & irons, 17th Novr., 1855	aged about 39 yrs. dark complexion, flat nose, bored ears, marks of ring worm on the body, inoculation mark on left hand, size 5 ft. Caste Sontal,

no.	Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & plate of residence :
		Z. Beer-bhoom.		Rest. of Khajoorree Thana -do- of Zl. -do-
15.	Bishoo Manjhee son of Gumbher	-do-	-do-	aged about 36 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, mark of an ulcer on the left side of the back, marks of burning 3 in number in left hand, inoculation mark on right hand, size 5 ft. 7 in. Rest. of Telabad, Thana -do- Zl. -do- Caste Sontal.
16.	Kurn Manjhee son of Chumpai	-do-	-do-	aged about 28 yrs. dark complexion, flat nose, marks of burning 3 in number in left hand, inoculation mark on right hand, size 5 ft. 2 in. Caste Sontal Rest. of Baginga, Thana Afzulpore.
17.	Raj Manjhee son of Chuttoora	-do-	-do-	aged about 34 yrs. dark complexion, bored ears, burning marks 7 in no. on left hand mark of an ulcer under

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
			the left shoulder of the back side, size 5 ft. 2 in. caste S o n t a l. Rest. of -do-
18. Dolel Manjhee son of Mansing.	-do-	-do-	aged about 56 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, bored ears, inoculation marks on both hand, size 5 ft. 4 in. Caste Sontal, Rest. of Kotapoba- rya Tha. Nulhollz Zl. Beerbhoom.
19. Seetul Manjhee son of Beersingh	-do-	-do-	aged about 15 yrs. dark complexion, short nose, bored ears, inoculation marks 5 in no. in left hand, size 4 ft. 10 in. Caste Sontal Rest. -do-
20 Beersing son of Shom	Illegally & riotously assembling with wea- pons & plundering the village of Katna in Z. Beer- bhoom.	To be impri- soned with labor & iron for 5 (five) Yrs. 7th Novr. 1855	aged about 45 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, inocula- tion marks 4 in 'no. in the left hand one in the right hand, size 5 ft. 11 in. Caste Sontal, Rest. of -do-

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
21. Quttor Manjhee son of Meghroy	-do-	-do-	aged about 35 yrs. colour neither dark nor fair, mark of an ulcer on the belly, inoculation marks on both hand, size 5 ft. 3 in. Rest. of Subur- pore. Thana Null- hotty. Zl. Beer- bhoom. C a s t e Sontal.
22. Raman Manjhee son of Cheenoo.	-do-	-do-	aged about 33 yrs, dark complexion, short nose, inocula- tion marks 5 in number left and one in right hand. size 5 ft. 3 in. Caste Sontal, Rest. of Gheriaponce Thana Nulhatty, Zl. Beerbhoom.

Statement of 20 convicts sentenced by the sessions Judge of Zillah Beerbhoom to be imprisoned for different periods forwarded from Beerbhoom to Bankurah under the orders of Government, dt. 3rd December 1855, no. 3400.

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
1. Jugoo Monyee son of Ranjeet.	Illegally and riotou- sly assem- bling with	To be impri- soned with irons for three years	aged about 60 yrs. dark complexion, grey hairs, has a pustule under the



no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
	offensive weapons for the purpose of murder and to commit a breach of the peace.	& to pay a fine of Rs. 100 on or before 9th Dec. in default to labor 9th Nov. 1855	belly, inoculation marks 4 in number on left hand, size 5 ft. Resident of Garia pany, Thannah Nulhoty, Zl. Beerbhoom. Caste Santal.
2. Doolubh -do- son of Kanoo	-do-	-do-	aged about 38 yrs. colour neither dark nor fair, bared ear grey hairs, inoculation marks 5 in number on left hand, 5 ft. 5 in. Caste Santal, Resident Gariapancee, Thannah Nulhoty, Zl. Beerbhoom.
3. Bishoo Niuyee son of Sunkh.	-do-	to be imprd. for six years with labor & irons. 9th Nov. 1855.	aged about 38 yrs. dark complexion, bared ears, inoculation marks 3 in number in left-hand, size 5 ft. 3 in. Caste Sontal, Resident -do-
4. Sallor purch Moucek, son of Seedh	Illegally and riotously assembling with offensive weapon for the purpose	to be imprisoned with irons for three years & to pay a fine of Rs. 100 in lieu	

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
	of murder and to commit a breach of the peace.	of labor, 9th Nov. 1855.	
5. Denoo Monyee	-do-	Do for five years with labor and iron 9th Novr. 1855	aged about 23 yrs. co'our neither dark nor fair, short nose marks of burning on left armpit, inoculation marks 2 in left hand, size 5 ft. 3 in. Caste Kamar, Rt. -do-
6. Ballorom Mongee son of Mungli.	Illegally and riotously assembling with offensive weapons for the purpose of murder & to commit a breach of the peace	Do for 3 yrs. with Iron & pay a fine of Rs. 100 on lieu of labor. 9th Nov. 1855.	aged about 16 yrs. colour neither dark nor fair, inoculation marks 6 in number in left hand, size 5 ft. Caste S o n t a l, Resident -do- -do-
7. Murria-do- -do- Nema	-do-	-do-	aged about 15 yrs. dark complexion, flat nose, inoculation marks three in number on left hand & one in right hand, size 5 ft. 1 in. -do- -do-
8. Chundry	-do-	-do- for 5	aged about 46 yrs,

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence .
		years with labor & irons. 9th Nov. 1855.	colour neither dark nor fair, bored ear inoculation marks 4 in number on left hand, size 5 ft. 7 in. Caste Santal. Resident -do-
9. Ranjeet son of Ingoo	-do-	-do- -do-	aged about 27 yrs. short nose, inoculation marks 5 in number on left hand and one in right hand, size 5 ft. 5 in. Caste Santal. Resi. -do-
10. Mungle son of Chedom	-do-	-do- -do-	aged about 40 yrs. inoculation marks 6 in number on left hand, & one in right hand size 5 ft in. Caste Santal, Resi. -do-
11. Sona son of Dona	-do-	-do- -do-	aged about 16 yrs. colour neither dark nor fair, bared ears inoculations in left hand, size 5 ft. 2 in. Caste Santal. -do-
12. Gopal Marya son of Paran	-do-	to be imprisoned 3 yrs. with labor & irons, 9th Novr.,	aged 60 yrs. color neither dark nor fair, grey hairs, bored ears, inoculation marks

no.	Name of Prisoners :	Crime	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence .
			1855.	4 in number on left hand & one in right hand has a pustule in the left side of back, size 5 ft. 5 in. Caste Kamar, -do- -do-
13.	Soorjee Monjee son of Luckun	-do-	-do- for 5 years with labor & Iron 9th Novr., 1855.	aged about 33 yrs. dark complexion. flat nose. inoculation marks 5 in number on left hand & one in right hand, size 5 ft 5 in Caste Sontal. -do- -do-
14.	Nemai Monjee son of Sankoo.	-do-	-do-	aged about 39 yrs. dark complexion. bored ears. inoculation marks 5 in number in left hand & two on right hand. size 5 ft. 4 in. Caste Sontal, -do- -do-
15.	Mungus Monjee son of Tunkhoo	-do-	-do-	aged 34 yrs. dark complexion, bored ears, inoculation marks 6 in number on left hand & two in right hand, size 5 ft. 4 in. Caste Sontal, -do-
16.	Sham son	-do-	-do-	aged about 36 yrs.

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date	Description of their persons & place of residence :
of Seenoo			colour neither dark nor fair, bored ears, inoculation marks 3 in number on left hand and one in right hand, size 5 ft. 4 in. Caste Santal.
			-do- -do-
17. Megh Roy son of Hangroh	-do-	-do- 6 yrs. with labor & iron 9th Novr, 1855.	aged about 60 yrs. colour neither dark nor fair, nose bored ears, inoculation marks 4 in number on left hand & one on right hand, size 5 ft. 5 in. Caste Sontal, -do-
18. Domun Manjee son of Prostain	-do-	-do- 3 yrs. with labor & iron & to pay a fine of Rs. 100 on lieu of labor 9th Nov. 1855.	aged 58 yrs. colour neither dark nor fair, bored ears, has mark of an ulcer on back, inoculation marks 4 in number on left hand and one right hand size 5 ft. 1 in. Caste Sontal, Resident of Suburpore, Thannah Nulhotty, Zl. Beerbhoom.

no. Name of Prisoners :	Crime :	Sentence with date :	Description of their persons & place of residence :
19. Ram Manjee son of Anta	-do- -do-	-do- 5 yrs. with labor & iron 9th Nov. 1855.	aged about 37 yrs. colour neither dark nor fair, bored ears, inoculation marks 7 in number on left hand, marks of an ulcer under right eye, size 5 ft 4 in. Rest. -do- -do-
20. Bursha son of Bessoo	-do- -do-	-do- -do-	aged about 35 yrs. dark complexion, bored ears, inocula- tion marks 6 in number on left hand, and one on right hand, size 4 ft. 11 in. C a s t e Sontal, Resident, -do- -do-

Beerbhoom,  
the 13th Decr., 1855.

A. R. THOMPSON  
Offg. Magistrate

**EXTRACTS FROM THE STATEMENT OF KANOO  
SONTHAL, 20th DECEMBER, 1855.**

**Examined by ASHLEY EDEN**

**(Assistant Special Commissioner)**

The Mahajans complained to Buroo Darogah that Seedoo & Kanoo were collecting men to commit a dacoitee, the Mahajans gave him 100 Rs. to come & catch us. The Darogah was sitting at Baboopara he sent a burkundauge to me before. He counted the men I then gave a purwannah to the burkundauge saying the Thacoor has descended & we are assembled for the purpose of making a complaint why do you interfere, the darogah remained 2 days & then went. ...Then I sent for him & he came with the Muhajans into a maindan. He asked me, "where are you going". I said, "I have come about a purwannah I sent you." He said that he had seen the purwannah but that he did not come to through fear & the Majahans showed a purwannah forbidding him to come to me also & told him to bring soldiers with him or else, the Sonthals would take his head off, then I said I did not send that purwannah the Mahajans have altered my purwannah & sent you that. I said, "why have you come?" He said, "I have come to investigate a snake bite death". Then he said that, you are collecting men for a dacoitee". I said prove it, if I have committed a theft or decoitee. If you prove anything put me in jail. The Mahajans said if it costs us 1000 Rs. we will do that to get you imprisoned. The Mahajans & the Darogah got very angry & ordered them to tie me up. The Mahajans began to tie Seedoo my brother, then I drew my sword then they left off tying my brother & I cut Manick Mudie's head off & Seedoo killed the Darogah and my army killed 5 men whose names I do not know, then we all returned to Bhaguadee."

**CHAPTER 7**  
**EXTRACTS FROM WRITINGS OF BRITISH**  
**CIVILIANS : W. W. HUNTER, C. E. BUCKLAND,**  
**L. S. S. O' MALLEY.**

**W. W. HUNTER**  
**(Bengal Civil Service)**

(I) \*

The Santal colony within the ring of masonry pillars in the north became, under the lenient treatment of the British Government as safe and peaceful as any district, of Lower Bengal. Hindu merchants flocked thither every winter after harvest to buy up the crop, and by degrees each market-town throughout the settlement had its resident Hindu grain-dealer. The Santal was ignorant and honest; the trading Hindu is keen and unscrupulous. Not a year passed without some successful shop-keeper returning from the hill slopes to astonish his native town by a display of quickly-gotten wealth, and to buy land upon the plains. The Santal country came to be regarded by the less honourable orders of Hindus as a country where a fortune was to be made, no matter by what means, so that it was made rapidly. That the Hindus appear throughout their whole connection with the Santals as cheats, extortioners, and oppressors, tells neither more nor less disgracefully against the Hindu population in general, than the unscrupulous conduct of a few English adventurers would tell against the honour of the English nation. Along the skirt of the Santal country, from the ring-fenced colony on the north to the highland valleys of Beerbhoom, Hindu hucksters settled upon various pretences, and in a few years grew into men of fortune. They cheated the poor Santal in every transaction. The forester brought his jars of clarified butter for sale; the Hindu measured it in vessels with false bottoms; the husbandman came to exchange his

\* *Annals of Rural Bengal.*



rice for salt, oil, cloth, and gun-powder ; the Hindu used heavy weights in ascertaining the quantity of grain • light ones in weighing out the articles given in return. If the Santal remonstrated, he was told that salt, being an excisable commodity, had a set of weights and measures peculiar to itself. The fortunes made by traffic in produce were augmented by usury. A family of new settlers required a small advance of grain to eke out the produce of the chase while they were clearing the jungle. The Hindu dealer gave them a few shillings' worth of rice, and seized the land as soon as they had cleared it and sown the crop. Another family, in a fit of hospitality, feasted away their whole harvest, and then opened an account at the grain-dealer's who advanced enough to keep them above starvation during the rest of the year. From the moment the peasant touched the borrowed rice, he and his children were the serfs of the corn merchant. No matter what economy the family practised, no matter what effort they made to extricate themselves ; stint as they might, toil as they might, the Hindu claimed the whole crop, and carried on a balance to be paid out of the next harvest. Year after year the Santal sweated for his oppressor. If the victim threatened to run off into the jungle, the usurer instituted a suit in the courts, taking care that the Santal should know nothing of it till the decree had been obtained the execution taken out. Without the slightest warning, the poor husbandman's buffaloes, cows, and little homestead were sold, not omitting the brazen household vessels which formed the sole heirloom of the family. Even the cheap iron ornaments, the outward tokens of female respectability among the Santals, were torn from the wife's wrist. Redress was out of the question : the court sat in the civil station perhaps a hundred miles off. The English Judge, engrossed with the collection of the revenue, had no time for the petty grievances of his people. The native underlings, one and all, had taken the pay of the oppressor : the police shared in the spoil. 'God is great, but He is too far off', said the Santal ; and the poor cried, and there was none to help them.

Of all this, Government knew nothing. A single English officer had been deputed to look after the Santa's, and what

one man could do he appears to have done. As cultivation extended he enhanced the land-tax, and without oppression, or raising a single murmur, the revenue rose under his management from £668 in 1838 to £6803 in 1854. The administration of justice had to be deputed to inferior officers of the courts, Hindus who naturally sided with plaintiffs of their own race against the despised Santal. The servants of an association like the East India Company, which had to make its dividends out of the revenues, were constantly liable to the temptation of looking at Government in their light of a mercantile undertaking, and of estimating its success by its profits. The temptation the Court of Directors resisted with a consistency most creditable to our nation, but ambitious subordinates in India sometimes took a narrower view, for the benign maxim that Indian Governors are the trustees of the Indian people, not merely of a few hundred English share-holders, obtained a full and definite recognition only when India passed under the British Crown. In the administration of the Santal settlement, everything that cost money without bringing in a tangible return was avoided. Nothing was spent in obtaining a knowledge of the people. The superintendent was pre-eminently a practical man ; and so it fell out that, early in 1855 the most peaceful province in the empire became the scene of a protracted rebellion, without any one being able to give either warning or explanation. Many of the Santals had no land or crop to pledge for their little debts. If a man of this class required a few shillings to bury his father, he went to the Hindu usurer for it ; and having no security to offer except his manual labour and that of his children, he bound over himself and family as slaves till the loan should be repaid. The few pieces of silver were speedily spent on his father's pyre, the funeral feast was eaten, and next morning the unhappy household started for the usurer's residence and delivered themselves into slavery. The matter neither excepted nor wished for the repayment of the debt, and took care, by working his slave every hour of the day, to leave him no leisure for earning a *peculium* with which to buy his liberty. The only inheritance

he had to leave to his children was the debt, at first a few shillings, but now grown by compound interest at 33 per cent, into many pounds. If the slave refused to give up his whole time, the master stopped his food if he worked for other people, the master took out legal execution against his person, and soon brought the ignorant creature to his knees, by artfully exaggerating the terrors of the jail.

During the cold weather of 1854 and 1855, the Santals appeared to be in a strange, restless state. They had gathered in an excellent crop, and the influx of capital had enhanced the local price of agricultural produce. Nevertheless the highlanders continued excited and discontented. In spite of high prices for their grain and high wages for their labour, the race swayed restlessly about. The truth was, that the rich Santals had determined to be no longer the dupes of the Hindus, who intercepted these high prices; the poorer agriculturists had determined to be no longer their serfs, and the day-labourers had determined no longer to be their slaves.

To a people in this frame of mind, leaders are seldom wanting. Two brothers, inhabitants of a village that had been oppressed beyond bearing by Hindu usury, stood forth as the deliverers of their countrymen, claimed a divine mission, and produced heaven-sent tokens as their credentials. The god of the Santals, they said, had appeared to them on seven successive days: at first in the form of a white man in a native costume; next as a flame of fire, with a knife glowing in the midst; then as the perforated slice of a Sal trunk which forms the wheel of a the Santal's bullock cart. The divinity delivered to the two brothers a sacred book, and the sky showered down slips of paper, which were secretly spread through the whole Santal country. Each village received a scrap without a word of explanation, but with an imprecation, as it would avoid the wrath of the national god, to forward it without a moment's pause to the nearest hamlet. Having in this way raised a general expectation of some great event among their countrymen, the leaders hoped that their English governors would inquire into the matter, and redress their wrongs; but their

English governors had no time for such inquiries. They next petitioned the chief authority to do them justice adding obscurely, that their god had commanded them to wait no longer. This officer knew nothing of the people or their wrongs. A cheap and practical administration had only time to look after its revenues; the Santal administration did this effectively; and for the terrible retribution which our ignorance of the people brought upon us, the system, not only individual officer, must be blamed. The English superintendent collected the revenue as usual, and put aside the complaints: the Santal leaders in despair had recourse to the Commissioner—a high English official in charge of a division of the province—and it is said, plainly told him that if he would not redress their wrongs, they would redress them themselves. The Commissioner could not understand what they wanted: the taxes came in as usual; the administration continued cheap, and practical as before. ‘God is great, but He is too far off’, said the Santal leaders. A last resource remained. Emissaries, bearing the national Sal branch, were despatched to every mountain valley; and the people, obedient to the singal, gathered together in vast masses, not knowing for what object, but with their expectation excited by the slips of paper, and carrying the invariable bow and arrows in their hands.

The brothers found that they had raised a storm which they could not control. A general order went through the encampment to move down upon the plains towards Calcutta and on the 30th Jnne, 1855 the vast expedition set out. The bodyguard of the leaders alone amounted to 30,000 men. As long as the food which they had brought from their villages lasted, the march was orderly; but unofficered bodies of armed men roaming about, not very well knowing where they are going, soon became dangerous; and with the end of their own stock of provisions, the necessity for plundering or levying benevolences commenced. The leaders preferred the latter, the rabble the former. On the 7th of July a native inspector of police heard of the entrance of a vast body of hill-men with the two brothers at their head into his jurisdiction; and the Hindu

usurers, becoming uneasy, bribed him to get up a false charge of burglary against the band, and apprehend their leaders. He went out with his guards, but was met half-way by an embassy from the Santals, with instructions to escort him into their camp. The two brothers ordered him to levy a tax of ten shillings on every Hindu family in his jurisdiction, for the subsistence of their followers, and were about to dismiss him in peace when some one discovered that he had come out with the intention of getting up a false complaint. At first he denied the charge, saying he was on his way to investigate an accidental death from snakebite, but afterwards confessed the usurers had bribed him to get up a false case of burglary, and bring in their leaders bound. The two brothers said, if you have any proof against us, take us and bind us. The foolhardy inspector, presuming on the usually peaceable nature of the Santals, ordered his guards to pinion them ; but no sooner were the words out of his mouth than the whole mass rushed upon him and bound him and his minions, After a hurried trial, the chief leader Sidu slew the corrupt inspector with his own hands, and the police left nine of their party dead in the Santal camp.

‘It was not war’, the commanding officer went on to say : ‘they did not understand yielding. As long as their national drums beat, the whole party would stand, and allow themselves to be shot down. Their arrows often killed our men, and so we had to fire on them as long as they stood. When their drums ceased, they would move off for about a quarter of a mile ; then their drums began again, and they calmly stood still we came up and poured a few volleys into them. There was not a Sepoy in the war who did not feel ashamed of himself. The prisoners were for the most part wounded men.

C. E. BUCKLAND, C. I. E.

( Indian Civil Service, 1901 )

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The Sonthal *Parganas* which now form the southern district of the Bhagalpur Division, were not always inhabited by the Sonthals. In the Census report of 1872, the total number of Sonthals was returned at 923532, of whom 455513 or nearly one-half were in that district. They were (according to Sir W. W. Hunter) an aboriginal Kolarian tribe, inhabiting a tract of country about 350 miles in length, extending from the Ganges at Bhagalpur to the Baitarni river in Orissa. They colonised parts of the Hazaribagh district and parts of Birbhum at a very remote period, and it was chiefly by migrations from these colonies that the modern Sonthalia was formed. They are said to have immigrated in considerable numbers about the middle of last century and cultivated all the valleys and lower slopes of the hills, so that the *paharias* ( or hill-men ) with no settled cultivation confined to the hillsides. Their origin characteristics, habits etc., have been fully described by Colonel Dalton and other writers and I need not dilate upon them here. The insurrection of the Sonthals in 1855 broke out suddenly. It was described by Lord Dalhousie in his final minute of February 1856 as a local outbreak, "little looked for." But there had been signs of coming trouble. In the cold weather of 1854, they were in a restless excited state ; their grievances were being agitated among themselves. Then tract of the country called the Damin-i-koh, or skirt of the hills, comprised in 1832 within a defined boundary, was divided between the districts of Bhagalpur, Murshidabad and Birbhum. It was under the fiscal and general management. Mr. Pontet, subordinate to the Commissioner of Bhagalpur, and in criminal matters under the Magistrate of Bhagalpur. There was only one resident

Magistrate at Deoghur. To the wild Sonthal, justice was far off and very difficult of access at the Bhagalpur Courts, Bengali grain-dealers had flocked to the Sonthal country for business purposes. It was no wonder that the ignorant and helpless Sonthals should fall easy victims to the unscrupulous *mahajan*. Once in the clutches of the usurers, they became with their families their bondslaves. And this was occurring at the time when a railway line skirting the Sonthal country for 200 miles was under construction, and creating an immense demand for labour. The bondslaves, working to pay off debts which were never satisfied, felt the contrast between themselves and the free workers. Thus it was the grinding oppression of the Bengali *mahajans* on the semi-savage Sonthals that was the main cause of the outbreak. The latter had no sufficient protection against the crafty Bengali, and the machinery of the Civil Courts was employed only as an instrument to rivet the chains of servitude. Thus, it has been said, the Sonthals, starting with the desire to revenge themselves on the Hindu money-lenders who had taken advantage of their simplicity and improvidence, found themselves arrayed in arms against the British Government. The noted leaders of the rebellion, two brothers, Seedoo and Kanoo lived with their less forward brothers. Chand and Bhairab, at a village Bhagnadihi, half a mile from Burhait, the capital of all the Sonthal towns and villages. There is reason to suppose that this village had been particularly oppressed. The two brothers were men of strong personal character, and brooded over the wrongs of their race. They claimed to have seen apparitions of their *Thakur*, and to have been favoured with scraps of paper, which were distributed through the country. They also sent forth a *sal*-tree branch to their brothers and others, as a sign to rouse the clans. On the 30th of June accordingly 10,000 Sonthals are supposed to have met at Bhagnadihi, and it was said, though it was not proved, that the assemblage, at Seedoo's direction, addressed Government and all subordinate authorities. The intentions of the movement were announced to be against the *mahajans*, *zamindars* and all rich Bengalis: not against Government. On

the 7th July, the *Daroga* of Thana Dighi or Burio Bazar, went out with his escort to inquire about the assemblage : he was promptly despatched by Seedoo, nine persons were killed by the Sonthals and the Police party fled. The rebellion, thus commenced with bloodshed, spread rapidly with many frightful atrocities. The whole country rose. The insurgents were armed with bows and poisoned arrows, axes, swords and a few guns only. But with these weapons they carried all before them for a time through the western districts. Villages were sacked and burnt, three European gentlemen and two English ladies were killed.... The course of the insurgents was marked throughout by scenes of inhuman and atrocious cruelties, ruthless murders, burnings, pillage and devastation ; even railway works were destroyed. There were not at the time, it was said, 1,200 troops within 80 miles of the rebels. The troops available were, however, rapidly mobilized from Dinapore and Calcutta to Raniganj and about the 25th July placed under Brigadier-General Lloyd. When information of the assemblage was received at Bhagalpur, the Hill Rangers were called out and advanced to Colgong. In an encounter on the 16th July with the insurgents they lost their Sergeant-major, 25 men of the crops, and an indigo-planter. For a time the Sonthals held possession of the country from Colgong to Palsa on the Ganges, and nearly to Birbhum and Raniganj on the west. With reinforcements of European troops and Native Infantry, the Hill Rangers cleared the country round Bhagalpur about the end of August, drove the insurgents southwards and recovered large quantities of plunder and stores. The Birbhum side of the country was more disturbed and for a longer time. A force was sent to prevent the Sonthals from crossing the Damodar and the Grand Trunk Road, and to protect Birbhum. Several engagements with the insurgents took place : the troops met with partial reverses, but by the 17th of August quiet was restored to this part of the country, though the rebels under arms were still estimated to exceed 30,000.

The insurgents were also active on the Murshidabad border on the north of the Damin-i-koh, and along the south bank of the Ganges from Colgong to Rajmahal. The latter place was



saved by the resolution and energy of Mr. Vigors, a Railway Engineer, who fortified his residence. To the west of Rajmahal, the Sonthals ravaged the country in the face of troops, who remained inactive. On the Murshidabad border, the first move was made by the Berhampore troops with Mr. Toogood, the Magistrate of Murshidabad, through Aurungabad and Doolian. They were too late to catch the rebels at Kadamsa (where the letter had been checked by the indigo-planters) but came up with them at Mohespur and inflicted a signal defeat; three of the brother leaders were wounded, but not mortally. The troops reached Burhait on the 24th July, and again beat the rebels at Rogunathpur. Soon afterwards, Seedoo was given up to the Bhagalpur troops through treachery. Garrison posts were planted on the Murshidabad border, and on further violence was experienced in that quarter. The rainy season of the year was unsuited for active operations in pursuit of the rebels, who found refuge in the jungles. Sir F. Halliday had been desirous of proclaiming martial law in August, but the Government of India, under the influence of Sir Barnes Peacock and Sir J. P. Grant, had refused permission. A proclamation issued by the local Government, inviting the rebels to surrender on terms, was rejected by them and in some places treated with contempt. Though the conduct of the military operations against the Sonthals had been placed entirely in the hands of the military authorities, still the Civil Law was the law of the disturbed country and the tactics of the military were to some extent subjected to Civil control: it has been said that the military remained individually amenable to the Civil officers for their acts. Misunderstandings constantly occurred. In September, the rebels resumed activity in parts of Birbhum and Bhagalpur: and it became apparent that Martial Law was necessary. This was accordingly proclaimed on the 10th November; and its effect was soon apparent. The Proclamation ran as follows:

“Whereas certain persons of the tribe of Sonthals and others, inhabitants of the Rajmahal Hills, of the Damin-i-koh, and of certain *parganas* in the districts of Bhagalpur, Murshidabad and Birbhum, and owing allegiance to the

British Government, are and for some time past have been, in open rebellion against the authority of the Government ; and whereas, soon after the first out-break of the said rebellion, a proclamation was issued offering a free pardon to all who should come in and submit within a period of 10 days, except ring leaders and persons convicted of murder, notwithstanding which act of clemency the great body of the rebels have not availed themselves of the offer of mercy thus held out, but continue in rebellion ; wherefore, it has become necessary for the speedy and effectual suppression of this rebellion that advantage should be taken of the season to commence systematic military operations against the rebels, for which purpose it is expedient that Martial Law should be declared, and that the functions of the ordinary Criminal Courts of Judicature should be partially suspended in the said districts ;

It is hereby proclaimed and notified, that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, in the exercise of the authority given to him by Regulation X of 1804 and with the assent and concurrence of the President in Council, does hereby establish Martial Law in the following districts, that is to say : so much of the district of Bhagalpur as lies on the right bank of the river Ganges ; so much of the district of Murshidabad as lies on the right bank of the river Bhagirathi : the district of Birbhum ; And that the said Lieutenant-Governor does also suspend the functions of the ordinary Criminal Courts of Judicature within the districts above described with respect to all persons, Sonthals and others, owing allegiance to the British Government, in consequence of their either having been born or being residents within its territories and under its protection, who after the date of this Proclamation and within the districts above described, shall be taken in arms in open hostility to the said Government, or shall be taken in the act of opposing by force of arms the authority of the same, or shall be taken in the actual commission of any overt act of rebellion against the State ;

And that the same Lieutenant-Governor does also hereby direct that all persons, Sonthals and others, owing allegiance to the British Government who, after the date of this Proclamation, shall be taken as aforesaid, shall be tried by Court Martial ; and it is hereby notified that any person convicted of any of the said crimes by the sentence of such Court will be liable, under section 3, Regulation X of 1804, to the immediate punishment of death."

The weather becoming more suitable for operations, a military force, organised in sufficient strength, swept through the country and speedily subjugated all those who had not been broken by the ravages of hunger and disease, from which the Sonthals had suffered grievously since the line of troops had been drawn round them. Many of them tried to quit the country by escape to the south but were not suffered to cross the Grand Trunk Road. On the 31st December, the insurrection was officially declared to have been entirely suppressed. The thanks of Government were awarded to Major-General Lloyd, C. B. and Brigadier-General Bird and the Field Force was broken up. General Lloyd had exercised great discretion forbearance and humane consideration in his action towards the misguided people with whom he had to deal : a few ring-leaders were executed and, on the capture of Kanoo, quiet was restored to the country. A large number of Sonthal prisoners were tried and condemned ; and the further operation of Martial Law was suspended on the 3rd January 1856. A few fresh outrages thereupon occurred, but the Sonthals had lost heart and were badly in want of food ; so the renewal of the insurrection soon died away. By the end of the cold weather, the rebels had formally submitted and resumed work. On the pacification of the country, inquiry was made into the grievances of the Sonthals, with a view to their redress. The investigation was well conducted by the Hon'ble Mr. (Sir A.) Eden, C. S., specially deputed for the purpose. The results were that a separate non-regulation district was formed of the Sonthal *Parganas* : a Deputy Commissioner was placed in charge, with four assistants, all vested with Civil as well as Criminal jurisdiction, under

the Commissioner of Bhagalpur as Commissioner of the Sonthal *Parganas*. Laws were passed, Acts XXXVII of 1855 and X of 1857, making the Sonthal country independent of the jurisdiction of the Regular Courts, by removing the district called Damin-i-koh and the other districts principally inhabited by that tribe from the operation of the general laws and regulations which were found to be unsuited to so uncivilised a race. Another Act XXXVIII was passed in December 1855, to be in force for three years and provide for the speedy trial and punishment of rebellion and other heinous crimes committed within the districts in which Martial Law was proclaimed.

L. S. S. O' MALLEY

( Indian Civil Service, 1910 )

(III)\*

The Santals seem to have settled first in the district between 1790 and 1810, having made their way northwards from Birbhum, where they had been brought in about 1790 to clear jungle and drive out the wild beasts which then infested the country.

Santal  
Rebellion.

The exact date at which the first body of immigrants came is not known, but the unpublished manuscript of Buchanan Hamilton shows that a number of them had settled in Dumka sub-division by 1809, "having come last from Birbhum in consequence of the annoyance which they received from its zamindars." Between 1815 and 1830, there appears to have been a further advance of the Santals. In 1818, Mr. Sutherland found them busy clearing the forest below the hills in the Godda sub-division ; in 1827 Mr. Ward noticed that they had settled in the extreme north of the same sub-division ; while a report of Mr. Dunbar, Collector of Bhagalpur, shows that by 1836 no less than 427 villages had been established in the Damin-i-koh "inhabited by the Santals and Bhuiyas, but chiefly by the former." Under the administration of Mr. Pontet, who was directed to give them every encouragement in clearing

jungle, the Santals spread far afield without much opposition from the idle Paharias, and even penetrated to the Burhait valley in the heart of the Rajmahal Hills. "This Valley," wrote Captain Sherwill in 1851, "viewed from any of the surrounding hills affords an admirable example of what can be done with natives, when their natural industry and perseverance are guarded and encouraged by kindness. When Mr. Pontet took charge of the hills in 1835, this valley was a wilderness, inhabited here and there by hillmen ; the remainder was overrun with heavy forest,' in which wild elephants and tigers were numerous ; but now in 1851 several hundred substantial Santal villagers, with an abundance of cattle and surrounded by luxuriant crops, occupy this hitherto neglected spot. The hillmen have with a few exceptions retired to the hills".

It was among the Santal settlers in the Damin-i-koh that the rebellion of 1855, known as the *hul*, had its origin, the older settlers of the Dumka sub-division taking little part in it. The causes of the rebellion were several, the Santals themselves declaring that their chief grievances were the prevalence of falsehood, the negligence of the *sahibs*, the extortion of the *mahajans*, the corruption of the *amlas*, and the oppression of the police. All these grievances were due very largely to the absence of European officers and the presence of Bengali and other *Dikku*, i. e., non-Santal, immigrants who had flocked in to carry on trade and money-lending among the Santals. The district as now constituted was divided between Bhagalpur and Birbhum, and the only resident Magistrate was at Deoghar. The revenue administration of the Damin-i-koh was under the Superintendent, assisted by four *naib sasawals*, who used to visit it in order to collect rent and settle disputes about lands. The Superintendent was the only European official who visited the Damin, and he had no authority to deal with civil and criminal cases. The Santal had therefore to make his way to the courts at Deoghar and Bhagalpur. Justice was thus far off ; the Bengali *mahajan* was at his door. The Santal, thriftless and improvident easily got into debt ; exorbitant interest was charged, and once he had contracted a debt he had little chance

of escape.

If his creditor sued him, all the evidence the Santal could produce was a knotted string, in which the knots represented the number of rupees he had received and the spaces between them the years which had elapsed since he took the loan. The usurer, on the other hand, had his ledgers and day-book ready, all carefully written up, and a bond or a deed of sale, or a mortgage, perhaps, forged for the occasion. Often he did not trouble to refer to the courts to realise his capital and interest. He simply sent his agents and swept off his debtor's cattle. The Santal, ignorant and timid, felt that it was a hopeless task for him to obtain redress against a wealthy oppressor. He seldom lodged a complaint, for his sole wealth consisting of his cattle, he could not fee *mukhtars* and *amlas*. Should he overcome these difficulties and venture to complain, he probably would only get an order on the police to enquire and report, and the police played into the hands of the money-lender. In the Damini-i-koh, therefore, Government asserted its position neither through the courts nor through the executive. The courts were remote and practically inaccessible; their processes were served by corrupt *amlas* and peons. The executive was represented by the *naib sazwals* or *darogas*, also corrupt and oppressive, who were ready instruments in the hands of the *mahajan*, besides making exactions on their own account. Not only did the Santals find themselves neglected, but they saw very different treatment given to their neighbours, the Paharias, who had special police rules and were exempt from the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts.

Outside the Damini-i.koh, in zamindari areas, the Santal was better off, for though *mahajans* had been allowed to settle freely in the villages, the old zamindars were at least a counterbalancing force and prevented them usurping too much power. The latter, however, were being supplanted by the hated *Dikhus* or foreigners, who ousted their Santal tenants from the lands they had cleared. These lands had been settled with them by the original zamindars on long leases at easy rates that they might reclaim jungle. As cultivation extended the Bengalis and

other foreigners induced the Santals to sell some of their surplus lands. They thus gradually extended their holdings, and finally secured the best lands in the village by exacting mortgages from the improvident Santals in return for loans. Many of the Santals were consequently driven to commence life again by clearing fresh jungle and founding new villages, to be again ousted by their more astute and unscrupulous neighbours. Several old *ghatwali* families and petty landholders also got into difficulties, their estates were sold and passed into the hands of the *Dikhus*. In some cases, again, old families became indebted to Bengalis and executed usufructuary mortgages of their estates for a term of years on the understanding that the mortgagees would pay the Government revenue. The latter, however, wilfully omitted to pay revenue, and the result was that the landlord was declared a defaulter and his estate sold, the mortgagee himself eventually becoming a *benami* purchaser. As long as the old proprietors remained, the Santals were well treated, but after the advent of Bengalis and other land speculators, no consideration was shown to them. The new landlords were non-resident; they rack-rented the ryots, and the latter in despair gave up their leases and were replaced by strangers.

Another device which worked much mischief among the Santals was the execution of bonds, by which the debtor promised to work out his debt by personal service and the payment of an exorbitant rate of interest. The Santal thus became a *kamiya*, i. e., the bond servant of his creditor. The effects of this system may be realized from the remarks of Mr. (later Sir) William LeFleming Robinson, I.c.s., who in 1858 secured its abolition in the Santal Parganas. "It was called *Kamiotee*, but it is not peculiar to Sonthalia or the Sonthals. You will find it nearly all over the country, I believe, in one form or another. But in Sonthalia it was very bad. A man borrowed money and gave a bond to work it out binding himself to work for the lender, whenever he was required, without pay. The lender of course required his servies at harvest and the other busy seasons of the year, when the debtor could have got work and pay elsewhere; and when work was slack, the

lender of course did not require his slave's services. He could make nothing elsewhere ; all he got when working was food, and sometimes a bit of cloth once a year. As interest was taken in advance, the debtor could never work out his debt ; the interest was never less than 25 per cent., often much more. The son, daughter or other nearest relation of the debtor used in case of his death to be considered liable, and if suits were brought against these bonds in the old Munsiff's courts, they used to give decrees for their due execution, no matter how old the debt or who was working it out at the time. I have had a bond brought to me in which Rs. 25 was originally borrowed by a man who worked his lifetime, his son did ditto, and I released his grandson from any further necessity ; it had been running on for over thirty years, if I remember rightly !" The discontent of the Santals under this system was accentuated by the good wages obtained by free labourers. The latter went away to work on the railway, which was then under construction, and returning with their savings were able to deck out their women in simple finery and feast their fellow villagers.

Last, but by no means least, there was another influence at work, viz. the Santals' yearning for independence and for recognition as lords of the soil—a motive which inspired them with the idea of establishing a kingdom for themselves under their own *Subahs* or chiefs.

The grievances of the Santals had for some time produced a spirit of unrest, which resulted, in 1854, in a number of *mahajans'* houses being attacked at night. These outrages were treated as ordinary dacoities, and their perpetrators were caught, tried and convicted, protesting bitterly that their oppressors were not even rebuked. In January 1855, two gang robberies were committed by Santals, but Government ordered the release of the convicted robbers, as it appeared that the crime was due to the oppression of usurers. It seems probable that this act of clemency was regarded by the Santals as a confession of weakness. However that may be, in July 1855 a revolt broke out among the Santals, who found leaders in four brothers named, Sidu, Khanu, Chandu and Bhairab, inhabitants



of the village of Bhagnadihi, a short distance south of Burhait, which had suffered much from the Hindu usurers. All four were landless men, and Sidu and Khanu, who were the leading spirits, had long been brooding over their real or imaginary wrongs. They now gave out that they had witnessed a divine apparition and been charged with a divine message. The story ran that a Thakur or god appeared to them in the form of a white man, dressed like a native, with ten fingers on each hand. He wrote in a book, which he gave the brothers, together with 20 pieces of paper in five batches. He then ascended upwards and disappeared, after which two men appeared, each with six fingers on each hand, and having told them the purport of the Thakur's order, likewise vanished. For some time, the god appeared to the brothers every day : at one time as a flame of fire, with a book, some white paper and a knife ; at another in the form of a solid cart wheel. A shrine was erected consisting of a mound of mud crowned by a cart wheel, at which the villagers were instructed to present offerings of grain and milk, and to sacrifice kids and buffaloes. Here the worshippers were shown the slips of paper and the book (which proved to be none other than the Gospel according to St. John), and were told that in them were written the orders of the god. The news of the miracle spread far and wide, and messengers were sent to all the *manjhis* of the Damin-i-koh bearing a branch of the *sal* tree, which, like the fiery cross of the Highlands, was a signal to the people to gather together.

On the appointed day, the 30th June 1855, at full moon, 10,000 Santals are said to have met at Bhagnadihi, where the Thakur's orders to them were announced. Letters are said to have been written addressed to Government, to the authorities at Bhagalpur and Birbhum, to some police *darogas*, zamindars and others, informing them of these orders. The Santals, it is said, disclaimed any intentions of opposing the Government, and declared that their new god had directed them to collect and pay revenue to the State, at the rate of two annas on every buffalo-plough, one anna on each bullock-plough, and half-an-anna on each cow-plough per annum. The rate of interest upon

loans was to be one pice in the rupee yearly. The Santals were further enjoined to slaughter at once all the *mahajans* and *darogas*, to banish the traders and zamindars and all rich Bengalis from their country, to sever their connection with the Damin-i-koh, and to fight all who resisted them, for the bullets of their enemies would be turned to water. Whatever may be the truth of this story, there is no trace of any letters containing this proclamation having been received by the authorities. It appears, however, that Khanu and Sidu proclaimed themselves lords of the country under the title of *Subahs*, and appointed *naibs*, *darogas* and other subordinate officers.

The *daroga* of Dighi or Burio Bazar having heard of the gathering, set out with a following of *barkandazes* to arrest the four brothers, instigated, it is said, by some Hindu money-lenders, who feared for themselves and brided him to bring a false charge of dacoity against them. When he met the Santals assembled at Pachkutia, a little north of Barhait, they refused to disperse, and directed him to levy a tax of Rs. 5 on every Bengali family in the neighbourhood. Then, on his angrily ordering the arrest of the brothers, they fell on him with their battle-axes and cut off his head. After this murder, the Santals set out on the war trail. The Collector of Bhagalpur and Mr. Pontet were at the time at Rajmahal, where they took shelter in the old Sangidalan or palace of Shah Shuja, then the house of the Railway Engineer, Mr. Vigors. This was barricaded and fortified, and they and the railway officials held it against the attacks of the rebels until troops arrived. When the news of the outbreak reached Bhagalpur, the Hill Rangers were called out and advanced to Pialapur, but they were beaten off the field by the Santals, in spite of the latter being armed only with bows and arrows. The Santals were left masters of the country and ravaged it from Colgong on the west to Rajmahal on the east, and nearly as far as Raniganj and Sainthia on the south.

The first move against them was made by a detachment of 400 men of the 7th Native Infantry, which, on the 11th July, advanced from Berhampore under Mr. Toogood, the Magistrate

of Murshidabad. The rebels had marched eastward and after killing a *sazawal* known as Khan Sahib, had fired the house of the Raja of Ambar at Kadamsair, a few miles south of Pakaur. They next attacked an indigo factory at the same place, but were held in check by the planter, Mr. C. Maseyk, who, with two companions armed with fowling pieces, fired at them from a boat in the middle of a nullah. News of the attack was sent to his brother at Dullian, and the civil authorities sent up 160 police, who forced the rebels to retreat. Unable to effect their purpose, the Santals moved on, destroying some railway works and sacking Pakaur, and then fell on Palsa in Birbhum. The troops arrived at Kadamsair shortly after the Santals had left, and pursued them to Palsa, too late, however, to save it from being sacked. They marched on the same night to Maheshpur, where they signally defeated the rebels next morning (July 15th); Sidu, Khanu and Bhairab were wounded, though not mortally, and 200 other Santals killed and wounded. Chandu and Khanu met another reverse at Raghunathpur not long afterwards; and at Maheshpur, which was garrisoned by a detachment of the 7th Native Infantry, the Santals failed in an attack on the Raja's house, which they wanted as a residence for their *Subah*. A few days later the troops, after overcoming a faint resistance, forced the passes in the hills, and on the 24th July took Burhait, the Santal capital; while Sidu was treacherously handed over to the Bhagalpur troops by some of his followers.

Towards the end of July all the troops available had been mobilized and placed under the command of Brigadier-General Lloyd, who had already acquired some fame as the founder of Darjeeling and subsequently tarnished his reputation by his failure to suppress the mutiny at Dinapore in 1857. Colonel Bird was shortly afterwards appointed to the special command of the troops employed in the Bankura and Birbhum districts. General Lloyd was not, however, given full and independent authority; for though he was at first informed the Government placed the conduct of the operations entirely in his hands, an order issued on the 30th July stated that, "it was not intended that the military should act independently of the civil power,

but that only the nature of the military operations should be entirely in the hands of the military commanders." There were consequently misunderstandings between the civil and military officers, and the Governor of India also refused to permit the Lieutenant-Governor to proclaim martial law. Within a month however, the country to the north, towards Bhagalpur, had been cleared and the insurgents driven southwards, and in the south quiet had been restored to some parts. But there were still 30,000 men in arms, and after each reverse they took refuge in the jungle, from which it was difficult to expel them during the rains.

The local Government now issued a proclamation offering a free pardon to all who would come in and submit within ten days, except ring-leaders and persons proved to have committed murder. The offer was treated as a confession of weakness, and in September the rebels showed renewed activity. By the end of the month the whole country from Deoghar to the south-western border of the district was in their hands. In one direction an army of Santals moved through the district three thousand strong, and in another their number amounted to Seven thousand. The beginning of cold weather, however, enabled the troops to take the field with greater effect and on the 10th of November martial law was proclaimed, i.e. was directed that any one taken in arms in open hostility to Government, or opposing its authority before of arms, or committing any overt act of rebellion should be tried by Court Martial and, if convicted, immediately executed. A large force now swept through the country, to which little resistance was offered by the Santals, who, unable to break through the cordon of troops. in some places 12 000 to 14,000 strong, were weakened by hunger and disease. The combined effect of the proclamation and of the activity of the troops was soon apparent. Driven out of the open country, the Santals were forced back to the jungles, and a number of their leaders were captured, including Khanu, who was taken prisoner near Upardanda, north-east of Jamtara, by the *cardar chowal* of Kunjra. Eventually, on the 3rd January 1856. quiet had been

so far restored, that the Government of India were able to suspend the further operation of martial law.\* There were a few outbreaks after this, but the rebels were thoroughly broken and cowed ; and by the end of the cold weather the rising was at an end.

(III) *Bengal District Gazetteers—Santal Parganas.*

## CHAPTER 8

### EXTRACTS FROM SOME PERSONAL NARRATIVES

1. Major Vincent Jervis, an officer who played an important part in putting down the rebellion.

(as quoted in W.W. Hunter's *The Annals of Rural Bengal*)

.. "One evening when my regiment was at Barrackpur, the Colonel sent for me and ordered me to march next morning with a detachment to Raneeunge, in Birbhoom, as the hill tribes had broken out. I had heard nothing of the affair before, not was it, so far as I remember, talked of in military circles. Next morning I started at 4 a.m. and reached Burdwan by train about breakfast time. The Commissioner (the Chief Civil Officer of the division of the province) came to me and ordered me to push on direct for Soorie, the capital of Birbhoom, as it was in instant danger of attack. We marched for two days and a night, the rain pouring the whole way, and my men without any regular food. As we came near to Soorie, we found panic in every village. The Hindus fairly lined the road, welcoming us with tears in their eyes, and pressing sweetmeats and parched rice upon my exhausted Sepoys. At Soorie we found things, if possible, worse. One officer kept his horse saddled day and night, the jail seemed to have been hastily fortified, and the bulk of the coin from the treasury was said, I know not with what truth to be hid in a well."

2. Narrative derived from Contemporary Press.

(as quoted in W. W. Hunter's *The Annals of Rural Bengal*)

....The authorities underrated the danger in a greater and more fatal degree than the outside community had exaggerated it.

The Santal insurrection found the government strongly imbued with this spirit. A contemporary writer stated that when the blow was at last struck twelve hundred troops could not be found within eighty miles of the rebels. For a whole fortnight the Santals spread fire and sword throughout the Western districts. The armed masses ceased to be controlled by the leaders who had set them on and before the end of July, scores of villages have been burned, thousands of cattle driven away, our troops beaten back, and several Englishmen along with two English ladies slain. Many a little English station and factory lay at the mercy of the murderers; and that the atrocities of the mutiny of 1857 were not anticipated in 1855 is due not to want of opportunity but to the natural mildness of the Santals, only one of their leaders attack in English residents unless in self-defence. Government at once despatched troops but the rains had set in and the rivers became impassable for days together.

## COMPILER'S NOTE

The Santals took to arms in 1855. That a local revolt assumed the form of a rebellion compelling the colonial administration to use all their might to crush it by brute force was no isolated event. Even Karl Marx, in his *Notes on Indian History*, recognised the importance of this event. No wonder, therefore, that it has been hailed by some historians as a precursor to India's first War of Independence of 1857. The Santal Rebellion and its aftermath have since been considered a watershed in Indian history and still continue to inspire the deprived in their continued fight against socio-economic exploitation. Native arrow could hardly be a match for the British bullet, and the uprising was soon quelled. The event however, left its mark in the subsequent history of the region.

When the Government of West Bengal decided to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the Santal Uprising, in June 1980, it was considered appropriate that the function be titled **FROM SANTAL REBELLION TO OPERATION BARGA**. The idea was to connect the experience of the past with the progressive democratic efforts of the present. The accent was obviously on the presentation of facts which would speak for themselves and not on an idle romanticisation of history. The function, appropriately enough, was organised in a remote tribal area in Birbhum District the theatre of the initial encounters. It was presided over by Shri Jyoti Basu, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, and was followed by a mass meeting attended by thousands of people, including tribal people.

To mark the occasion, two booklets were published containing mostly accounts of British and Bengali scholars and and civilians, with a view to providing a historical perspective to this important event to the younger generation of social scientists, administrators and public men. The interest gene-



rated by the function, has prompted me to compile this volume.

I am no historian, nor have I any claim to scholarship. But since I had the privilege to be closely associated with the aforesaid celebration in a supervisory capacity and because as an Officer of the Board of Revenue, West Bengal, I had to go through a considerable pile of documents, which are both historically significant and extremely absorbing, I thought it advisable to make them available for wider readership. This slim volume is an effort in that direction.

This is a collection of some contemporary documents and subsequent writing, primarily by British Civilians, on the Santal Rebellion of 1855. There is hardly any material, used in this volume not published earlier. I have only attempted to compile them and arrange them in chapters. My purpose was to provide some important raw material to interested readers in a handy form, to inspire further serious reading.

Finally, my words of thanks. My thanks are due to Shri Manik Sarkar, Dy. Director, I. & C. A. Department who prepared the two booklets in connection with the function and enthused me to collect and compile this book containing official correspondence and notes and the writings of concerned officers. I am grateful to Shri D. Bandyopadhyay, the then Land Reforms Commissioner, West Bengal, who had entrusted me with this job and under whose guidance and supervision I had the opportunity to work. He has also kindly favoured me by writing an introduction to this volume. I am indebted to Shri Binay Choudhury, Minister-in-charge, Land & Land Reforms Department, Govt. of West Bengal, for kindly permitting me to use the materials compiled here.

*1st February*

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### *Acknowledgements*

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